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A PICKED COMPANY

BEING A SELECTION FROM THE
WRITINGS OF

H. BELLOC



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PREFACE

THIS volume, which has been compiled from seventeen of Mr. Belloc's books, may be claimed to be representative of his many-sided genius. The selection has been made by Mr. E. V. Lucas. The omission of any passage from *The Path to Rome* is due to copyright difficulties, while the author himself prefers that his poems should remain in his volume, *Verses*, 1910.

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A PICKED COMPANY

ESSAYS

ON THE PLEASURE OF TAKING UP ONE'S PEN¹

AMONG the sadder and smaller pleasures of this world I count this pleasure: the pleasure of taking up one's pen.

It has been said by very many people that there is a tangible pleasure in the mere act of writing: in choosing and arranging words. It has been denied by many. It is affirmed and denied in the life of Doctor Johnson, and for my part I would say that it is very true in some rare moods and wholly false in most others. However, of writing and the pleasure in it I am not writing here (with pleasure), but of the pleasure of taking up one's pen, which is quite another matter.

Note what the action means. You are alone. Even if the room is crowded (as was the smoking-room in the G.W.R. Hotel, at Paddington, only the other day, when I wrote my "Statistical Abstract of Christendom"), even if the room is crowded, you must have made yourself alone to be able to write at all. You must have built up some kind of wall and isolated your mind. You are alone, then; and that is the beginning.

If you consider at what pains men are to be alone: how they climb mountains, enter prisons, profess monastic vows, put on eccentric daily habits, and

¹ From *On Nothing*.

seclude themselves in the garrets of a great town, you will see that this moment of taking up the pen is not least happy in the fact that then, by a mere association of ideas, the writer is alone.

So much for that. Now not only are you alone, but you are going to "create."

When people say "create" they flatter themselves. No man can create anything. I knew a man once who drew a horse on a bit of paper to amuse the company and covered it all over with many parallel streaks as he drew. When he had done this, an aged priest (present upon that occasion) said, "You are pleased to draw a zebra." When the priest said this the man began to curse and to swear, and to protest that he had never seen or heard of a zebra. He said it was all done out of his own head, and he called heaven to witness, and his patron saint (for he was of the Old English Territorial Catholic Families—his patron saint was Æthelstan), and the salvation of his immortal soul he also staked, that he was as innocent of zebras as the babe unborn. But there! He persuaded no one, and the priest scored. It was most evident that the Territorial was crammed full of zebraical knowledge.

All this, then, is a digression, and it must be admitted that there is no such thing as a man's "creating." But anyhow, when you take up your pen you do something devilish pleasing: there is a prospect before you. You are going to develop a germ: I don't know what it is, and I promise you I won't call it creation—but possibly a god is creating through you, and at least you are making believe at creation. Anyhow, it is a sense of mastery and of origin, and you know that when you have done, something will be added to the world, and little destroyed. For what will you have destroyed or wasted? A certain amount of white paper at a farthing a square yard (and I am not certain it is not pleasanter all diversified and variegated with black wr ggles)—a certain amount of ink meant to be spread and dried: made for

no other purpose. A certain infinitesimal amount of quill—torn from the silly goose for no purpose whatsoever but to minister to the high needs of Man.

Here you cry "Affectation! Affectation! How do I know that the fellow writes with a quill? A most unlikely habit!" To that I answer you are right. Less assertion, please, and more humility. I will tell you frankly with what I am writing. I am writing with a Waterman's Ideal Fountain Pen. The nib is of pure gold, as was the throne of Charlemagne, in the "Song of Roland." That throne (I need hardly tell you) was borne into Spain across the cold and awful passes of the Pyrenees by no less than a hundred and twenty mules, and all the Western world adored it, and trembled before it when it was set up at every halt under pine trees, on the upland grasses. For he sat upon it, dreadful and commanding: there weighed upon him two centuries of age; his brows were level with justice and experience, and his beard was so tangled and full that he was called "bramble-bearded Charlemagne." You have read how, when he stretched out his hand at evening, the sun stood still till he had found the body of Roland? No? You must read about these things.

Well then, the pen is of pure gold, a pen that runs straight away like a willing horse, or a jolly little ship; indeed, it is a pen so excellent that it reminds me of my subject: the pleasure of taking up one's pen.

God bless you, pen! When I was a boy, and they told me work was honourable, useful, cleanly, sanitary, wholesome, and necessary to the mind of man, I paid no more attention to them than if they had told me that public men were usually honest, or that pigs could fly. It seemed to me that they were merely saying silly things they had been told to say. Nor do I doubt to this day that those who told me these things at school were but preaching a dull and careless round. But now I know that the things they

told me were true. God bless you, pen of work, pen of drudgery, pen of letters, pen of posings, pen rabid, pen ridiculous, pen glorified. Pray, little pen, be worthy of the love I bear you, and consider how noble I shall make you some day, when you shall live in a glass case with a crowd of tourists round you every day from ten to four ; pen of justice, pen of the *sæva indignatio*, pen of majesty and of light. I will write with you some day a considerable poem ; it is a compact between you and me. If I cannot make one of my own, then I will write out some other man's ; but you, pen, come what may, shall write out a good poem before you die, if it is only the *Allegro*.

The pleasure of taking up one's pen has also this, peculiar among all pleasures, that you have the freedom to lay it down when you will. Not so with love. Not so with victory. Not so with glory.

Had I begun the other way round, I would have called this Work "The Pleasure of laying down one's Pen." But I began it where I began it, and I am going on to end it just where it is going to end.

What other occupation, avocation, dissertation, or intellectual recreation can you cease at will ? Not bridge—you go on playing to win. Not public speaking—they ring a bell. Not mere converse—you have to answer everything the other insufficient person says. Not life, for it is wrong to kill oneself ; and as for the natural end of living, that does not come by one's choice ; on the contrary, it is the most capricious of all accidents.

But the pen you lay down when you will. At any moment : without remorse, without anxiety, without dishonour, you are free to do this dignified and final thing (I am just going to do it). . . . You lay it down.

THE PLEASANT PLACE ¹

A GENTLEMAN of my acquaintance came to me the other day for sympathy. . . . But first I must describe him :

He is a man of careful, not neat, dress : I would call it sober rather than neat. He is always clean-shaven and his scanty hair is kept short-cut. He is occupied in letters ; he is, to put it bluntly, a literator ; none the less he is possessed of scholarship and is a minor authority upon English pottery.

He is a very good writer of verse ; he is not exactly a poet, but still, his verse is remarkable. Two of his pieces have been publicly praised by political peers and at least half a dozen of them have been praised in private by the ladies of that world. He is a man fifty-four years of age, and, if I may say so without betraying him, a little disappointed.

He came to me, I say, for sympathy. I was sitting in my study watching the pouring rain falling upon the already soaked and drenched and drowned clay lands of my county. The leafless trees (which are in our part of a low but thick sort) were standing against a dead grey sky with a sort of ghost of movement in it, when he came in, opened his umbrella carefully so that it might not drip, and left it in the stone-floored passage—which is, to be accurate, six hundred years old—kicked off his galoshes and begged my hospitality ; also (let me say it for the third time) my sympathy.

¹ From *This and That*.

He said he had suffered greatly and that he desired to tell me the whole tale. I was very willing and his tale was this :

It seems that my friend (according to his account) found himself recently in a country of a very delightful character.

This country lay up and heavenly upon a sort of table-land. One went up a road which led continually higher and higher through the ravines of the mountains, until, passing through a natural gate of rock, one saw before one a wide plain bounded upon the further side by the highest crests of the range. Through this upland plain ran a broad and noble river whose reaches he could see in glimpses for miles, and upon the further banks of it, in a direction opposite that which the gate of rock regarded, was a very delightful city.

The walls of this city were old in their texture, venerable and majestic in their lines. Within their circumference could be discerned sacred buildings of a similar antiquity, but also modern and convenient houses of a kind which my friend had not come across before, but which were evidently suited to the genial, sunlit climate, as also to the habits of leisured men. Their roofs were flat, covered in places by awnings, in other places by tiled verandahs, and these roofs were often disposed in the form of little gardens.

Trees were numerous in the city and showed their tops above the lower buildings, while the lines of their foliage indicated the direction of the streets.

My friend was passing down the road which led to this plain—and as it descended it took on an ampler and more majestic character—when he came upon a traveller who appeared to be walking in the direction of the town.

This traveller asked him courteously in the English tongue whether he were bound for the city. My friend was constrained to reply that he could not pretend to any definite plan, but certainly the prospect

all round him was so pleasant and the aspect of the town so inviting, that he would rather visit the capital of this delightful land at once than linger in its outskirts.

"Come with me, then," said the Traveller, "and, if I may make so bold upon so short an acquaintance, accept my hospitality. I have a good house upon the wall of the town and my rank among the citizens of it is that of a merchant ;—I am glad to say a prosperous one."

He spoke without affectation and with so much kindness, that my friend was ravished to discover such a companion, and they proceeded in leisurely company over the few miles that separated them from their goal.

The road was now paved in every part with small square slabs, quite smooth and apparently constructed of some sort of marble. Upon either side there ran canalized in the shining stone a little stream of perfectly clear water. From time to time they would pass a lovely shrine or statue which the country people had adorned with garlands. As they approached the city they discovered a noble bridge in the manner, my friend believed, of the Italian Renaissance, with strong elliptical arches and built, like all the rest of the way, of marble, while the balustrade upon either side of it was so disposed in short symmetrical columns as to be particularly grateful to the eye. Over this bridge there went to and fro a great concourse of people, all smiling, eager, happy and busy, largely acquainted, apparently, each with the others, nodding, exchanging news, and in a word forming a most blessed company.

As they entered the city my friend's companion, who had talked of many things upon their way and had seemed to unite the most perfect courtesy and modesty with the widest knowledge, asked him whether there was any food or drink to which he was particularly attached.

"For," said he, "I make a point whenever I enter-

tain a guest—and that,” he put in with a laugh, “is, I am glad to say, a thing that happens frequently—I make a point, I say, of asking him what he really prefers. It makes such a difference!”

My friend began his reply with those conventional phrases to which we are all accustomed, “That he would be only too happy to take whatever was set before him,” “That the prospect of his hospitality was a sufficient guarantee of his satisfaction,” and so forth: but his host would take no denial.

“No, no!” said he. “Do please say just what you prefer! It is so easy to arrange—if you only knew! . . . Come, I know the place better than you,” he added, smiling again; “you have no conception of its resources. Pray tell me quite simply before we leave this street”—for they were now in a street of sumptuous and well-appointed shops—“exactly what shall be commissioned.”

Moved by I know not what freedom of expression, and expansive in a degree which he had never yet known, my friend smiled back and said: “Well, to tell you the truth, some such meal as this would appeal to me: First two dozen green-bearded oysters of the Arcachon kind, opened upon the *deep* shell with all their juices preserved, and each exquisitely cleaned. These set upon pounded ice and served in that sort of dish which is contrived for *each* oyster to repose in its own little recess with a sort of side arrangement for the reception of the empty shells.”

His host nodded gravely, as one who takes in all that is said to him.

“Next,” said my friend, in an enthusiastic manner, “real and good Russian caviare, cold but not frozen, and so touched with lemon—only just so touched—as to be perfect. With this I think a little of the wine called Barsac should be drunk, and that cooled to about thirty-eight degrees—(Fahrenheit). After this a True Bouillon, and by a True Bouillon,” said my friend with earnestness, “I mean a Bouillon that has long simmered in the pot and has been properly

skimmed, and has been seasoned not only with the customary herbs but also with a suspicion of carrot and of onion, and a mere breath of tarragon."

"Right!" said his host. "Right!" nodding with real appreciation.

"And next," said my friend, halting in the street to continue his list, "I think there should be eggs."

"Right," said his host once more approvingly; "and shall we say——"

"No," interrupted my friend eagerly, "let me speak. Eggs *sur-le-plat*, frizzled to the exact degree."

"Just what I was about to suggest," answered his delighted entertainer; "and black pepper, I hope, ground large upon them in fresh granules from a proper wooden mill."

"Yes! Yes!" said my friend, now lyric, "and with sea salt in large crystals."

On saying which both of them fell into a sort of ecstasy which my friend broke by adding:

"Something quite light to follow . . . preferably a sugar-cured Ham braised in white wine. Then, I think, spinach, not with the ham, but after it; and that spinach cooked perfectly dry. We will conclude with some of the cheese called Brie. And for wine during all these latter courses we will drink the wine of Chinon: Chinon Grillé. What they call," he added slyly, "the *Fausse maigre*; for it is a wine thin at sight but full in the drinking of it."

"Good! Excellent!" said his host, clapping his hands together once with a gesture of finality. "And then after the lot you shall have coffee."

"Yes, coffee roasted during the meal and ground immediately before its concoction. And for liqueur . . ."

My friend was suddenly taken with a little doubt. "I dare not ask," said he, "for the liqueur called Aquebus? Once only did I taste it. A monk gave it me on Christmas Eve four years ago and I think it is not known!"

"Oh, ask for it by all means!" said his host.

"Why, we know it and love it in this place as though it were a member of the family!"

My friend could hardly believe his ears on hearing such things, and said nothing of cigars. But to his astonishment his host, putting his left hand on my friend's shoulder, looked him full in the face and said: "And now shall I tell you about cigars?"

"I confess they were in my mind," said my friend.

"Why then," said his host, with an expression of profound happiness, "there is a cigar in this town which is full of flavour, black in colour, which does not bite the tongue, and which none the less satisfies whatever tobacco does satisfy in man. When you smoke it you really dream."

"Why," said my friend humbly, "very well then, let us mention these cigars as the completion of our little feast."

"Little *feast* indeed!" said his host, "why, it is but a most humble meal. Anyhow, I am glad to have had from you a proper schedule of your pleasures of the table. In time to come, when we know each other better, we will arrange other large and really satisfactory meals; but this will do very well for our initiatory lunch, as it were." And he laughed merrily.

"But have I not given you great trouble?" said my friend.

"How little you will easily perceive," said his companion, "for in this town we have but to order and all is at once promptly and intelligently done." With that he turned into a small office, where a commissary at once took down his order. "And now," said he emerging, "let us be home."

They went together down the turning of a couple of broad streets lined with great private palaces and public temples until they came to a garden which had no boundaries to it, but which was open, and apparently the property of the city. But the people who wandered here were at once so few, so discreet and so courteous, my friend could not discover whether they were (as their salutes seemed to indicate) the

dependents of his host, or merely acquaintances who recognized him upon their way.

This garden, as they proceeded, became more private and more domestic ; it led by narrowing paths through high, diversified trees, until, beyond the screen of a great beech hedge, he saw the house . . . and it was all that a house should be !

Its clear, well-set stone walls were in such perfect harmony with the climate and with the sky, its roof garden from which a child was greeting them upon their approach, so unexpected and so suitable, its arched open gallery was of so august a sort, and yet the domestic ornaments of its colonnade so familiar, that nothing could be conceived more appropriate for the residence of man.

The mere passage into this home out of the warm morning daylight into the inner domestic cool, was a benediction, and in the courtyard which they thus entered a lazy fountain leaped and babbled to itself in a manner that filled the heart with ease.

" I do not know," said his host in a gentle whisper as they crossed the courtyard, " whether it is your custom to bathe before the morning meal or in the middle of the afternoon ? "

" Why, sir," said my friend, " if I may tell the whole truth, I have no custom in the matter ; but perhaps the middle of the afternoon would suit me best."

" By all means," said his host in a satisfied tone. " And I think you have chosen wisely, for the meal you have ordered will very shortly be prepared. But, for your refreshment at least, one of my friends shall put you in order, cool your hands and forehead, see to your face and hair, put comfortable sandals upon your feet and give you a change of raiment."

All of this was done. My friend's host did well to call the servant who attended upon his guest a " friend," for there was in this man's manner no trace of servility or of dependence, and yet an eager willing-

ness for service coupled with a perfect reticence which was admirable to behold and feel.

When my friend had been thus refreshed he was conducted to a most exceptional little room. Four pictures were set in the walls of it, mosaics, they seemed—but he did not examine their medium closely. The room itself in its perfect lightness and harmony, with its view out through a large round arch upon the countryside beyond the walls (the old turrets of which made a framework for the view), exactly prepared him for the meal that was prepared.

While the oysters (delightful things!) were entering upon their tray and were being put upon the table, the host, taking my friend aside with an exquisite gesture of courteous privacy, led him through the window-arch on to a balcony without, and said, as they gazed upon the wall and the plain and the mountains beyond (and what a sight they were!):

"There is one thing, my dear sir, that I should like to say to you before you eat . . . it is rather a delicate matter. . . . You will not mind my being perfectly frank?"

"Speak on, speak on," said my friend, who by this time would have confided any interests whatsoever into the hands of such a host.

"Well," said that host, continuing a little carefully, "it is this: as you can see we are very careful in this city to make men as happy as may be. We are happy ourselves, and we love to confer happiness upon others, strangers and travellers who honour us with their presence. But we find—I am very sorry to say we find . . . that is, we find from time to time that their *complete* happiness, no matter with what we may provide them, is dashed by certain forms of anxiety, the chief of which is anxiety with regard to their future receipts of money."

My friend started.

"Nay, said his host hastily, "do not misunder-

stand me. I do not mean that preoccupations of business are alone so alarming. What I mean is that sometimes, yes, and I may say often (horrible as it seems to us !), our guests are in an active preoccupation about the petty business of finance. Some few have debts, it seems, in the wretched society from which they come, and of which, frankly, I know nothing. Others, though not indebted, feel insecure about the future. Others, though wealthy, are oppressed by their responsibilities. Now," he continued firmly, "I must tell you once and for all that we have a custom here upon which we take no denial : *no denial whatsoever*. Every man who enters this city, who *honours* us by entering this city, is made free of *that* sort of nonsense, thank God !" And as he said this, my friend's host breathed a great sigh of relief. "It would be intolerable to us to think," he continued, "that our welcome and dear companions were suffering from such a tawdry thing as money-worry in our presence. So the matter is plainly this : whether you like it or whether you do not, the sum of ten thousand pounds is already set down to your credit in the public bank of the city ; whether you use it or not is your business ; if you do not it is our custom to melt down an equivalent sum of gold and to cast it into the depths of the river, for we have of this metal an unfailing supply, and I confess we do not find it easy to understand the exaggerated value which other men place upon it."

"I do not know that I shall have occasion to use so magnificent a custom," said my friend, with an extraordinary relief in his heart, "but I certainly thank you very kindly for its intention, and I shall not hesitate to use any sum that may be necessary for my continuing the great happiness which this city appears to afford."

"You have spoken well," said his host, seizing both his hands, "and your frankness compels me to another confession : we have at our disposal a means of discovering exactly how any one of our guests may

stand : the responsibilities of the rich, the indebtedness of the embarrassed, the anxiety of those whose future may be precarious. May I tell you without discourtesy, that your own case is known to me and to two trustees, who are public officials—absolutely reliable—and whom, for that matter, you will not meet.”

My friend must have looked incredulous, but his host continued firmly : “It is so ; we have settled your whole matter, I am glad to say, on terms that settle all your liabilities and leave a further fifty thousand pounds to your credit in the public bank. But the size of the sum is in this city really of no importance. You may demand whatever you will, and enjoy, I hope, a complete security during your habitation here. And that habitation, both the Town Council and the National Government beg you, through me, to extend to the whole of your life.”

“Imagine,” said my friend, “how I felt. . . . The oysters were now upon the table, and before them, ready for consumption, the caviare. The Barsac in its original bottle, cooled (need I say !) to exactly thirty-eight degrees, stood ready . . .”

At this point he stopped and gazed into the fire.

“But, my dear fellow,” said I, “if you are coming to me for sympathy and simply succeed in making me hungry and cross . . .”

“No,” said my friend with a sob, “you don’t understand !” And he continued to gaze at the fire.

“Well, go *on*,” said I angrily.

“There isn’t any *on*,” he said ; “I woke !”

We both looked into the fire together for perhaps three minutes before I spoke and said :

“Will you have some wine ?”

“No thank you,” he answered sadly, “not *that* wine.” Then he got up uneasily and moved for his umbrella and his galoshes, and the passage and the

door. I thought he muttered, "You might have helped me."

"How could I help you?" I said savagely.

"Well," he sighed, "I thought you could. . . . It was a bitter disappointment. Good night!" And he went out again into the rain and over the clay.

ON INNS¹

HERE am I sitting in an Inn, having gloomily believed not half an hour ago that Inns were doomed with all other good things, but now more hopeful and catching avenues of escape through the encircling decay.

For though certainly that very subtle and final expression of a good nation's life, the Inn, is in peril, yet possibly it may survive.

This Inn which surrounds me as I write (the law forbids me to tell its name) is of the noblest in South England, and it is in South England that the chief Inns of the world still stand. In the hall of it, as you come in, are barrels of cider standing upon chairs. The woman that keeps this Inn is real and kind. She receives you so that you are glad to enter the house. She takes pleasure in her life. What was her beauty her daughter now inherits, and she serves at the bar. Her son is strong and carries up the luggage. The whole place is a paradise, and as one enters the hall one stands hesitating whether to enjoy its full, yet remaining delight, or to consider the peril of death that hangs to-day over all good things.

Consider, you wanderers (that is all men, whatsoever, for not one of you can rest), what an Inn is, and see if it should not rightly raise both great fears and great affection

An Inn is of the nation that made it. If you desire a proof that the unity of Christendom is not to be

¹ From *This and That*.

achieved save through a dozen varying nations, each of a hundred varying counties and provinces and these each of several countrysides—the Inns will furnish you with that proof.

If any foolish man pretend in your presence that the brotherhood of men should make a decent man cosmopolitan, reprove his error by the example of an Inn.

If anyone is so vile as to maintain in your presence that one's country should not be loved and loyally defended, confound so horrid a fool by the very vigorous picture of an Inn. And if he impudently says that some damned Babylon or other is better than an Inn, look up his ancestry.

For the truth is that Inns (may God preserve them, and of the few remaining breed, in spite of peril, a host of new Inns for our sons), Inns, Inns are the mirror and at the same time the flower of a people. The savour of men met in kindliness and in a homely way for years and years comes to inhabit all their panels (Inns are panelled) and lends incense to their fires. (Inns have not radiators, but fires.) But this good quintessence and distillation of comradeship varies from countryside to countryside and more from province to province, and more still from race to race and from realm to realm ; just as speech differs and music and all other excellent fruits of Europe.

Thus there is an Inn at Tout-de-suite-Tardets which the Basques made for themselves and offer to those who visit their delightful streams. A river flows under its balcony, tinkling along a sheer stone wall, and before it, high against the sunset, is a wood called Tiger Wood, clothing a rocky peak called the Peak of Eagles.

Now no one could have built that Inn, nor endowed it with its admirable spirit, save the cleanly but incomprehensible *Basques*. There is no such Inn in the Bearnese country, nor any among the Gascons.

In Falaise the Normans very slowly and by a mellow process of some thousand years have en-

gendered an Inn. This Inn, I think, is so good that you will with difficulty compare it with any better thing. It is as quiet as a tree on a summer night, and cooks cray-fish in an admirable way. Yet could not these *Normans* have built that *Basque* Inn; and a man that would merge one in the other and so drown both is an outlaw and to be treated as such.

But these Inns of South England (such as still stand!)—what can be said in proper praise of them which shall give their smell and colour and their souls? There is nothing like them in Europe, nor anything to set above them in all the world. It is within their walls and at their boards that one knows what South England once did in the world and why. If it is gone it is gone. All things die at last. But if it is gone—why, no lover of it need remain to drag his time out in mourning it. If South England is dead it is better to die upon its grave.

Whether it dies in our time or no you may test by the test of its *Inns*. If they may not weather the chaos, if they fail to round the point that menaces our religion and our very food, our humour and our prime affections—why, then, South England has gone too. If, if (I hardly dare to write such a challenge), if the Inns hold out a little time longer—why, then, South England will have turned the corner and Europe can breathe again. Never mind her extravagances, her follies or her sins. Next time you see her from a hill, pray for South England. For if she dies, you die. And as a symptom of her malady (some would say of her death-throes) carefully watch her Inns.

Of the enemies of Inns, as of rich men, dull men, blind men, weak-stomached men and men false to themselves, I do not speak: but of their effect. Why such blighting men are nowadays so powerful and why God has given them a brief moment of pride it is not for us to know. It is hidden among the secret things of this life. But that they *are* powerful all men, lovers of Inns, that is, lovers of right living,

know well enough and bitterly deplore. The effect of their power concerns us. It is like a wasting of our own flesh, a whitening of our own blood.

Thus there is the destruction of an Inn by gluttony of an evil sort—though to say so sounds absurd, for one would imagine that gluttony should be proper to Inns. And so it is, when it is your true gluttony of old, the gluttony of our fathers, made famous in English letters by the song which begins :

I am not a glutton
But I do like pie.

But evil gluttony, which may also be called the gluttony of devils, is another matter. It flies to liquor as to a drug ; it is ashamed of itself ; it swallows a glass behind a screen and hides. There is no companionship with it. It is an abomination, and this abomination has the power to destroy a Christian Inn and to substitute for it, first a gin palace, and then, in reaction against that, the very horrible house where they sell only tea and coffee and bubbly waters that bite and sting, both in the mouth and in the stomach. These places are hotbeds of despair, and suicides have passed their last hours on earth consuming slops therein alone.

Thus, again, a sad enemy of Inns is luxury. The rich will have their special habitations in a town so cut off from ordinary human beings that no Inn may be built in their neighbourhood. In which connexion I greatly praise that little colony of the rich which is settled on the western side of Berkeley Square, in Lansdowne House, and all around the eastern parts of Charles Street, for they have permitted to be established in their midst the "Running Footman," and this will count in the scale when their detestable vices are weighed upon the Day of Judgment, upon which day, you must know, vices are not put into the scale gently and carefully, so as to give you fair measure, but are banged down with enormous force by strong and maleficent demons.

Then, again, a very subtle enemy of Inns is poverty, when it is pushed to inhuman limits, and you will note especially in the dreadful great towns of the North, more than one ancient house which was once honourable and where Mr. Pickwick might very well have stayed, now turned ramshackle and dilapidated and abandoned, slattern, draggle-tail, a blotch, until the yet beastlier reformers come and pull it down to make an open space wherein the stunted children may play.

Thus, again, you will have the pulling down of an Inn and the setting up of an Hotel built of iron and mud, or ferro-concrete. This is murder.

Let me not be misunderstood. Many an honest Inn calls itself an hotel. I have no quarrel with that, nor has any traveller I think. It is a title. Some few blighted and accursed hotels call themselves "Inns"—a foul snobbism, a nasty trick of words pretending to create realities.

No, it is when the thing is really done, not when the name is changed, that murder calls out to God for vengeance.

I knew an Inn in South England, when I was a boy, that stood on the fringe of a larch wood, upon a great high road. Here when the springtime came and I went off to see the world I used to meet with carters and with travelling men, also keepers and men who bred horses and sold them, and sometimes with sailors padding the hoof between port and port. These men would tell me a thousand things. The larch trees were pleasant in their new colour; the woods alive with birds and the great high road was, in those days, deserted: for high bicycles were very rare, low bicycles were not invented, the rich went by train in those days; only carts and caravans and men with horses used the leisurely surface of the way.

Now that good Inn has gone. I was in it some five years ago, marvelling that it had changed so little, though motor things and money-changers went howling by in a stream and though there were now no

poachers or gipsies or forest men to speak to, when a too smart young man came in with two assistants and they began measuring, calculating, two-foot-ruling and jotting. This was the plot. Next came the deed. For in another year, when the spring burst and I passed by, what should I see in the place of my Inn, my Inn of youth, my Inn of memories, my Inn of trees, but a damnable stack of iron, with men fitting a thin shell of bricks to it like a skin. Next year the monster was alive and made. The old name (call it the Jolly) was flaunting on a vulgar signboard swing in cast-iron tracing to imitate forged work. The sheel of bricks was cast with sham-white as for half timber-work. The sham-white was patterned with sham-timbers of baltic deal, stained dark, with pins of wood stuck in : like Cheshire, not like home. Wrong lattice insulted the windows—and inside there were three bars. At the door stood an Evil Spirit, and within every room, upstairs and down, other devils, his servants, resided.

It is no light thing that such things should be done and that we cannot prevent them.

From the towns all Inns have been driven : from the villages most. No conscious efforts, no Bond Street nastiness of false conservation, will save the beloved roofs. Change your hearts or you will lose your Inns and you will deserve to have lost them. But when you have lost your Inns drown your empty selves, for you will have lost the last of England.

ON THE HOTEL AT PALMA AND A PROPOSED GUIDE-BOOK ¹

THE hotel at Palma is like the Savoy, but the cooking is a great deal better. It is large and new ; its decorations are in the modern style with twiddly lines. Its luxury is greater than that of its London competitor. It has an eager, willing porter and a delightful landlord. You do what you like in it and there are books to read. One of these books was an English guide-book. I read it. It was full of lies, so gross and palpable that I told my host how abominably it traduced his country, and advised him first to beat the book well and then to burn it over a slow fire. It said that the people were superstitious—it is false. They have no taboo about days ; they play about on Sundays. They have no taboo about drinks ; they drink what they feel inclined (which is wine) when they feel inclined (which is when they are thirsty). They have no taboo book, Bible or Koran, no damned psychical rubbish, no damned "folk-lore," no triply damned mumbo-jumbo of social ranks ; kind, really good, simple-minded dukes would have a devil of a time in Palma. Avoid it, my dears, keep away.

If anything, the people of Palma have not quite enough superstition. They play there for love, money, and amusement. No taboo (talking of love) about love.

¹ *From On Something.*

The book said they were poor. Their populace is three or four times as rich as ours. They own their own excellent houses and their own land ; no one but has all the meat and fruit and vegetables and wine he wants, and usually draught animals and musical instruments as well.

In fact, the book told the most frightful lies and was a worthy companion to other guide-books. It moved me to plan a guide-book of my own, in which the truth should be told about all the places I know. It should be called "Guide to Northumberland, Sussex, Chelsea, the French frontier, South Holland, the Solent, Lombardy, the North Sea, and Rome, with a chapter on part of Cheshire and some remarks on the United States of America."

In this book the fault would lie in its too great scrappiness, but the merit in its exactitude. Thus I would inform the reader that the best time to sleep in Siena is from nine in the morning till three in the afternoon, and that the best place to sleep is the north side of St Domenic's ugly brick church there.

Again, I would tell him that the man who keeps the "Turk's Head" at Valogne, in Normandy, was only outwardly and professedly an Atheist, but really and inwardly a Papist.

I would tell him that it sometimes snowed in Lombardy in June, for I have seen it—and that any fool can cross the Alps blindfold, and that the sea is usually calm, not rough, and that the people of Dax are the most horrible in all France, and that Lourdes, contrary to the general opinion, does work miracles, for I have seen them.

I would also tell him of the place at Toulouse where the harper plays to you during dinner, and of the grubby little inn at Terneuzen on the Scheldt, where they charge you just anything they please for anything ; five shillings for a bit of bread, or half a crown for a napkin.

All these things, and hundreds of others of the same kind, would I put in my book, and at the end should

be a list of all the hotels in Europe where, at the date of publication, the landlord was nice, for it is the character of the landlords which makes all the difference—and that changes as do all human things.

There you could see first, like a sort of Primate of Hotels, the Railway Hotel at York. Then the inn at La Bruyère in the Landes, then the "Swan" at Petworth, with its mild ale, then the "White Hart" of Storrington, then the rest of them, all the six or seven hundred of them, from the "Elephant" of Château Thierry to the "Feathers" of Ludlow—a truly noble remainder of what once was England; the "Feathers" of Ludlow, where the beds are of honest wood with curtains to them, and where a man may drink half the night with the citizens to the success of their engines and the putting out of all fires. For there are in West England three little inns in three little towns, all in a line, and all beginning with an L—Ledbury, Ludlow, and Leominster, all with "Feathers," all with orchards round, and I cannot tell which is the best.

Then my guide-book will go on to talk about harbours; it will prove how almost every harbour was impossible to make in a little boat; but it would describe the difficulties of each so that a man in a little boat might possibly make them. It would describe the rush of the tide outside Margate and the still more dangerous rush outside Shoreham, and the absurd bar at Littlehampton that strikes out of the sea, and the place to lie at in Newhaven, and how not to stick upon the Platters outside Harwich; and the very tortuous entry to Poole, and the long channel into Christchurch past Hengistbury Head; and the enormous tides of South Wales; and why you often have to beach at Britonferry, and the terrible difficulty of mooring in Great Yarmouth; and the sad changes of Little Yarmouth, and the single black buoy at Calais, which is much too far out to be of any use; and how to wait for the tide in the Swin. And also what no book has ever yet given, an exact direc-

tion of the way in which one may roll into Orford Haven, on the top of a spring tide if one has luck, and how, if one has no luck, one sticks on the gravel and is pounded to pieces.

Then my guide-book would go on to tell of the way in which to make men pleasant to you according to their climate and country · of how you must not hurry the people of Aragon, and how it is your duty to bargain with the people of Catalonia ; and how it is impossible to eat at Daroca ; and how careful one must be with gloomy men who keep inns at the very top of glens, especially if they are silent, under Cheviot. And how one must not talk religion when one has got over the Scotch border, with some remarks about Jedburgh, and the terrible things that happened to a man there who would talk religion although he had been plainly warned.

Then my guide-book would go on to tell how one should climb ordinary mountains, and why one should avoid feats ; and how to lose a guide which is a very valuable art, for when you have lost your guide you need not pay him. My book will also have a note (for it is hardly worth a chapter) on the proper method of frightening sheep dogs when they attempt to kill you with their teeth upon the everlasting hills.

This my good and new guide-book (oh, how it blossoms in my head as I write !) would further describe what trains go to what places, and in what way the boredom of them can best be overcome, and which expresses really go fast ; and I should have a footnote describing those lines of steamers on which one can travel for nothing if one puts a sufficiently bold face upon the matter.

My guide-book would have directions for the pacifying of Arabs, a trick which I learnt from a past master, a little way east of Batna in the year 1905. I will also explain how one can tell time by the stars and by the shadow of the sun ; upon what sort of food one can last longest and how best to carry it, and what rites propitiate, if they are solemnized in a due

order, the half-malicious fairies which haunt men when they are lost in lonely valleys, right up under the high peaks of the world. And my book should have a whole chapter devoted to Ulysses.

For you must know that one day I came into Narbonne where I had never been before, and I saw written up in large letters upon a big, ugly house :

ULYSSES,

LODGING FOR MAN AND BEAST.

So I went in and saw the master, who had a round bullet head and cropped hair, and I said to him : " What ! Are you landed, then, after all your journeys ? And do I find you at last, you of whom I have read so much and seen so little ? " But with an oath he refused me lodging.

This tale is true, as would be every other tale in my book.

What a fine book it will be !

THE ONION-EATER¹

THERE is a hill not far from my home whence it is possible to see northward and southward such a stretch of land as is not to be seen from any eminence among those I know in Western Europe. Southward the sea-plain and the sea standing up in a belt of light against the sky, and northward all the weald.

From this summit the eye is disturbed by no great cities of the modern sort, but a dozen at least of those small market towns which are the delight of South England hold the view from point to point, from the pale blue downs of the island over, eastward, to the Kentish hills.

A very long way off, and near the sea-line, the high faint spire of that cathedral which was once the mother of all my county goes up without weight into the air and gathers round it the delicate and distant outlines of the landscape—as, indeed, its builders meant that it should do. In such a spot, on such a high watch-tower of England, I met, three days ago, a man.

I had been riding my kind and honourable horse for two hours, broken, indeed, by a long rest in a deserted barn.

I had been his companion, I say, for two hours, and had told him a hundred interesting things—to which he had answered nothing at all—when I took him along a path that neither of us yet had trod. I had not, I know; he had not (I think), for he went snort-

¹ From *Hills and the Sea*.

ing and doubtfully. This path broke up from the kennels near Waltham, and made for the High Wood between Gumber and No Man's Land. It went over dead leaves and quite lonely to the thick of the forest ; there it died out into a vaguer and a vaguer trail. At last it ceased altogether, and for half an hour or so I pushed carefully, always climbing upwards, through the branches, and picked my way along the bramble-shoots, until at last I came out upon that open space of which I have spoken, and which I have known since my childhood. As I came out of the wood the south-west wind met me, full of the Atlantic, and it seemed to me to blow from Paradise.

I remembered, as I halted and so gazed north and south to the weald below me, and then again to the sea, the story of that Sultan who publicly proclaimed that he had possessed all power on earth, and had numbered on a tablet with his own hand each of his happy days, and had found them, when he came to die, to be seventeen. I knew what that heathen had meant, and I looked into my heart as I remembered the story, but I came back from the examination satisfied, for "so far," I said to myself, "this day is among my number, and the light is falling. I will count it for one." It was then that I saw before me, going easily and slowly across the downs, the figure of a man.

He was powerful, full of health and easy ; his clothes were rags ; his face was open and bronzed. I came at once off my horse to speak with him, and, holding my horse by the bridle, I led it forward till we met. Then I asked him whither he was going, and whether, as I knew these open hills by heart, I could not help him on his way.

He answered me that he was in no need of help, for he was bound nowhere, but that he had come up off the high road on to the hills in order to get his pleasure and also to see what there was on the other side. He said to me also, with evident enjoyment (and in the accent of a lettered man), "This is indeed a day to be alive !"

I saw that I had here some chance of an adventure, since it is not every day that one meets upon a lonely down a man of culture, in rags and happy. I therefore took the bridle right off my horse and let him nibble, and I sat down on the bank of the Roman road holding the leather of the bridle in my hand, and wiping the bit with plucked grass. The stranger sat down beside me, and drew from his pocket a piece of bread and a large onion. We then talked of those things which should chiefly occupy mankind : I mean, of happiness and of the destiny of the soul. Upon these matters I found him to be exact, thoughtful and just.

First, then, I said to him : " I also have been full of gladness all this day, and, what is more, as I came up the hill from Waltham I was inspired to verse, and wrote it inside my mind, completing a passage I had been working at for two years, upon joy. But it was easy for me to be happy, since I was on a horse and warm and well fed ; yet even for me such days are capricious. I have known but few in my life. They are each of them distinct and clear, so rare are they, and (what is more) so different are they in their very quality from all other days."

" You are right," he said, " in this last phrase of yours. . . . They are indeed quite other from all the common days of our lives. But you were wrong, I think, in saying that your horse and clothes and good feeding and the rest had to do with these curious intervals of content. Wealth makes the run of our days somewhat more easy, poverty makes them more hard—or very hard. But no poverty has ever yet brought of itself despair into the soul—the men who kill themselves are neither rich nor poor. Still less has wealth ever purchased those peculiar hours. I also am filled with their spirit to-day, and God knows," said he, cutting his onion in two, so that it gave out a strong savour, " God knows I can purchase nothing."

" Then tell me," I said, " whence do you believe

these moments come? And will you give me half your onion?"

"With pleasure," he replied, "for no man can eat a whole onion; and as for that other matter, why I think the door of heaven is ajar from time to time, and that light shines out upon us for a moment between its opening and closing." He said this in a merry, sober manner; his black eyes sparkled, and his large beard was blown about a little by the wind. Then he added: "If a man is a slave to the rich in the great cities (the most miserable of mankind), yet these days come to him. To the vicious wealthy and privileged men, whose faces are stamped hard with degradation, these days come; they come to you, you say, working (I suppose) in anxiety like most of men. They come to me who neither work nor am anxious so long as South England may freely import onions."

"I believe you are right," I said. "And I especially commend you for eating onions; they contain all health; they induce sleep; they may be called the apples of content, or, again, the companion fruits of mankind."

"I have always said," he answered gravely, "that when the couple of them left Eden they hid and took away with them an onion. I am moved in my soul to have known a man who reveres and loves them in the due measure, for such men are rare."

Then he asked, with evident anxiety: "Is there no inn about here where a man like me will be taken in?"

"Yes," I told him. "Down under the Combe at Duncton is a very good inn. Have you money to pay? Will you take some of my money?"

"I will take all you can possibly afford me," he answered in a cheerful, manly fashion. I counted out my money and found I had on me but three shillings and sevenpence. "Here is three shillings and sevenpence," I said.

"Thank you, indeed," he answered, taking the

coins and wrapping them in a little rag (for he had no pockets, but only holes).

"I wish," I said with regret, "we might meet and talk more often of many things. So much do we agree, and men like you and me are often lonely."

He shrugged his shoulders and put his head on one side, quizzing at me with his eyes. Then he shook his head decidedly, and said: "No, no—it is certain that we shall never meet again." And thanking me with great fervour, but briefly, he went largely and strongly down the escarpment of the Combe to Duncton and the weald; and I shall never see him again till the Great Day. . . .

THE HARBOUR IN THE NORTH ¹

UPON that shore of Europe which looks out towards no further shore, I came once by accident upon a certain man.

The day had been warm and almost calm, but a little breeze from the south-east had all day long given life to the sea. The seas had run very small and brilliant, yet without violence, before the wind, and had broken upon the granite cliffs to leeward, not in spouts of foam, but in a white, even line that was thin, and from which one heard no sound of surge. Moreover, as I was running dead north along the coast, the noise about the bows was very slight and pleasant. The regular and gentle wind came upon the quarter without change, and the heel of the boat was steady. No calm came with the late sunset; the breeze still held, and so till nearly midnight I could hold a course and hardly feel the pulling of the helm. Meanwhile the arch of the sunset endured, for I was far to the northward, and all those colours which belong to June above the Arctic Sea shone and changed in the slow progress of that arch as it advanced before me and mingled at last with the dawn. Throughout the hours of that journey I could see clearly the seams of the deck forward, the texture of the canvas and the natural hues of the woodwork and the rigging, the glint of the brasswork, and even the

¹ From *Hills and the Sea*.

letters painted round the little capstan-head, so continually did the light endure. The silence which properly belongs to darkness, and which accompanies the sleep of birds upon the sea, appeared to be the more intense because of such a continuance of the light, and what with a long vigil and new water, it was as though I had passed the edge of all known maps and had crossed the boundary of new land.

In such a mood I saw before me the dark band of a stone jetty running some miles off from the shore into the sea, and at the end of it a fixed beacon whose gleam showed against the translucent sky (and its broken reflection in the pale sea) as a candle shows when one pulls the curtains of one's room and lets in the beginnings of the day.

For this point I ran, and as I turned it I discovered a little harbour quite silent under the growing light ; there was not a man upon its wharves, and there was no smoke rising from its slate roofs. It was absolutely still. The boat swung easily round in the calm water, the pier-head slipped by, the screen of the pier-head beacon suddenly cut off its glare, and she went slowly with no air in her canvas towards the patch of darkness under the quay. There, as I did not know the place, I would not pick up moorings which another man might own and need, but as my boat still crept along with what was left of her way I let go the little anchor, for it was within an hour of low tide, and I was sure of water.

When I had done this she soon tugged at the chain and I slackened all the halyards. I put the cover on the mainsail, and as I did so, looking aft, I noted the high mountain-side behind the town standing clear in the dawn. I turned eastward to receive it. The light still lifted, and though I had not slept I could not but stay up and watch the glory growing over heaven. It was just then, when I had stowed everything away, that I heard to the right of me the crooning of a man.

A few moments before I should not have seen him

under the darkness of the sea-wall, but the light was so largely advanced (it was nearly two o'clock) that I now clearly made out both his craft and him.

She was sturdy and high, and I should think of slight draught. She was of great beam. She carried but one sail, and that was brown. He had it loose, with the peak dipped ready for hoisting, and he himself was busy at some work upon the floor, stowing and fitting his bundles, and as he worked he crooned gently to himself. It was then that I hailed him, but in a low voice, so much did the silence of that place impress itself upon all living beings who were strange to it. He looked up and told me that he had not seen me come in nor heard the rattling of the chain. I asked him what he would do so early, whether he was off fishing at that hour or whether he was taking parcels down the coast for hire or goods to sell at some other port. He answered me that he was doing none of those things.

"What cruise, then, are you about to take?" I said.

"I am off," he answered in a low and happy voice, "to find what is beyond the sea."

"And to what shore," said I, "do you mean to sail?"

He answered: "I am out upon this sea northward to where they say there is no further shore."

As he spoke he looked towards that horizon which now stood quite clean and clear between the pier-heads: his eyes were full of the broad daylight, and he breathed the rising wind as though it were a promise of new life and of unexpected things. I asked him then what his security was and had he formed a plan, and why he was setting out from this small place, unless, perhaps, it was his home, of which he might be tired.

"No," he answered, and smiled; "this is not my home; and I have come to it as you may have come to it, for the first time; and, like you, I came in after the whole place slept; but as I neared I noticed

certain shore marks and signs which had been given me, and then I knew that I had come to the starting-place of a long voyage."

"Of what voyage?" I asked.

He answered:

"This is ~~that~~ harbour in the north of which a Breton priest once told me that I should reach it, and when I had moored in it and laid my stores on board in order, I should set sail before morning and reach at last a complete repose." Then he went on with eagerness, though still talking low: "This voyage which I was born to make in the end, and to which my desire has driven me, is towards a place in which everything we have known is forgotten, except those things which, as we knew them, reminded us of an original joy. In that place I shall discover again such full moments of content as I have known, and I shall preserve them without failing. It is in some country beyond this sea, and it has a harbour like this harbour, only set towards the south, as this is towards the north; but like this harbour it looks out over an unknown sea, and like this harbour it enjoys a perpetual light. Of what the happy people in this country are, or of how they speak, no one has told me, but they will receive me well, for I am of one kind with themselves. But as to how I shall know this harbour, I can tell you: there is a range of hills, broken by a valley through which one sees a further and higher range, and steering for this hollow in the hills one sees a tower out to sea upon a rock, and high up inland a white quarry on a hill-top; and these two in line are the leading marks by which one gets clear into the mouth of the river, and so to the wharves of the town. And there," he ended, "I shall come off the sea for ever, and everyone will call me by my name."

The sun was now near the horizon, but not yet risen, and for a little time he said nothing to me nor I to him, for he was at work sweating up the halyard and setting the peak. He let go the mooring knot also, but he held the end of the rope in his hand and

paid it out, standing and looking upward, as the sail slowly filled and his craft drifted towards me. He pressed the tiller with his knee to keep her full.

I now knew by his eyes and voice that he was from the west, and I could not see him leave me without asking him from what place he came that he should set out for such another place. So I asked him : "Are you from Ireland, or from Brittany, or from the Islands ? "

He answered me : "I am from none of these, but from Cornwall." And as he answered me thus shortly he still watched the sail and still pressed the tiller with his knee, and still paid out the mooring rope without turning round.

"You cannot make the harbour," I said to him. "It is not of this world."

Just at that moment the breeze caught the peak of his jolly brown sail ; he dropped the tail of the rope ; it slipped and splashed into the harbour slime. His large boat heeled, shot up, just missed my cable ; and then he let her go free, and she ran clear away. As she ran he looked over his shoulder and laughed most cheerily ; he greeted me with his eyes, and he waved his hand to me in the morning light.

He held her well. A clean wake ran behind her. He put her straight for the harbour-mouth and passed the pier-heads and took the sea outside.

Whether in honest truth he was a fisherman out for fishes who chose to fence with me, or whether in that cruise of his he landed up in a Norwegian bay, or thought better of it in Orkney, or went through the sea and through death to the place he desired, I have never known.

I watched him holding on, and certainly he kept a course. The sun rose, the town awoke, but I would not cease from watching him. His sail still showed a smaller and a smaller point upon the sea ; he did not waver. For an hour I caught it and lost it, and caught it again, as it dwindled ; for half another hour

I could not swear to it in the blaze. Before I had wearied it was gone.

Oh! my companions, both you to whom I dedicate this book and you who have accompanied me over other hills and across other waters or before the guns in Burgundy, or you others who were with me when I seemed alone—that ulterior shore was the place we were seeking in every cruise and march and the place we thought at last to see. We, too, had in mind that Town of which this man spoke to me in the Scottish harbour before he sailed out northward to find what he could find. But I did not follow him, for even if I had followed him I should not have found the Town.

THE YOUNG PEOPLE¹

ONE of my amusements, a mournful one I admit, upon these fine spring days, is to watch in the streets of London the young people, and to wonder if they are what I was at their age.

There is an element in human life which the philosophers have neglected, and which I am at a loss to entitle, for I think no name has been coined for it. But I am not at a loss to describe it. It is that change in the proportion of things which is much more than a mere change in perspective, or in point of view. It is that change which makes Death so recognizable and too near; achievement necessarily imperfect, and desire necessarily mixed with calculation. It is more than that. It is a sort of seeing things from that far side of them, which was only guessed at or heard of at second hand in earlier years, but which is now palpable and part of the senses: known. All who have passed a certain age know what I mean.

This change, not so much in the aspect of things as in the texture of judgment, may mislead one when one judges youth; and it is best to trust to one's own memory of one's own youth if one would judge the young.

There I see a boy of twenty-five looking solemn enough, and walking a little too stiffly down Cockspur Street. Does he think himself immortal, I wonder, as I did? Does the thought of oblivion appal him as it did me? That he continually suffers in his dignity, that he thinks the passers-by all watch him,

¹ From *This and That*.

and that he is in terror of any singularity in dress or gesture, I can well believe, for that is common to all youth. But does he also, as did I and those of my time, purpose great things which are quite unattainable, and think the summit of success in any art to be the natural wage of living?

Then other things occur to me. Do these young people suffer or enjoy all our old illusions? Do they think the country invincible? Do they vaguely distinguish mankind into rich and poor, and think that the former from whom they spring are provided with their well-being by some natural and fatal process, like the recurrence of day and night? Are they as full of the old taboos of what a gentleman may and may not do? I wonder!—Possibly they are. I have not seen one of them wearing a billycock hat with a tail coat, nor one of them smoking a pipe in the street. And is life divided for them to-day as it was then, into three periods: their childhood; their much more important years at a public school (which last fill up most of their consciousness); their new untried occupation?

And do they still so grievously and so happily misjudge mankind? I think they must, judging by their eyes. I think they too believe that industry earns an increasing reward, that what is best done in any trade is best recognized and best paid; that labour is a happy business; and that women are of two kinds: the young who go about to please them, the old to whom they are indifferent.

Do they drink? I suppose so. They do not show it yet. Do they gamble? I conceive they do. Are their nerves still sound? Of that there can be no doubt! See them hop on and off the motor buses and cross the streets!

And what of their attitude towards the labels? Do they take, as I did, every man much talked of for a great man? Are they diffident when they meet such men? And do they feel themselves to be in the presence of gods? I should much like to put myself into the mind of one of them, and to see if to that

generation the simplest of all social lies is gospel. If it is so, I must suppose they think a Prime Minister, a Versifier, an Ambassador, a Lawyer who frequently comes up in the Press, to be some very superhuman person. And doubtless also they ascribe a sort of general quality to all much-talked-of or much-be-printed men, putting them on one little shelf apart, and all the rest of England in a ruck below.

Then this thought comes to me. What of their bewilderment? We used all to be so bewildered! Things did not fit in with the very simple and rigid scheme that was our most undoubted creed of the State. The motives of most commercial actions seemed inscrutable save to a few base contemporaries no older than ourselves, but cads, men who would always remain what we had first known them to be, small clerks upon the make. At what age, I wonder, to this generation will come the discovery that of *these* men and of *such* material the Great are made; and will the long business of discovery come to sadden them as late as it came to their elders?

I must believe that young man walking down Cockspur Street thinks that all great poets, all great painters, all great writers, all great statesmen, are those of whom he reads, and are all possessed of unlimited means and command the world. Further, I must believe that the young man walking down Cockspur Street (he had got to Northumberland Avenue by now) lives in a static world. For him things are immovable. There are the old: fathers and mothers and uncles; the very old are there, grandfathers, nurses, provosts, survivors. Only in books does one find at that age the change of human affection, child-bearing, anxiety for money, and death. All the children (he thinks) will be always children, and all the lovely women always young. And loyalty and generous regards are twin easy matters reposing natively in the soul, and as yet unbetrayed.

Well, if they are all like that, or even most of them, the young people, quite half the world is happy

Not one of that happy half remembers the Lion of Northumberland House, or the little streets there were behind the Foreign Office, or the old Strand, or Temple Bar, or what Coutts's used to be like, or Simpson's, or Soho as yet uninvaded by the great and good Lord Shaftesbury. No one of the young can pleasantly recall the Metropolitan Board of Works.

And for them, all the new things—houses which are veils of mud on stilts of iron, advertisements that shock the night, the rush of taxi-cabs and the Yankee hotels—are the things that always were and always will be.

A year to them is twenty years of ours. The summer for them is games and leisure, the winter is the country and a horse ; time is slow and stretched over long hours. They write a page that should be immortal, but will not be ; or they hammer out a lyric quite undistinguishable from its models, and yet to them a poignantly original thing.

Or am I all wrong ? Is the world so rapidly changing that the Young also are caught with the obsession of change ? Why, then, not even half the world is happy.

ON A HERMIT WHOM I KNEW¹

I N a valley of the Apennines, a little before it was day, I went down by the side of a torrent wondering where I should find repose ; for it was now some hours since I had given up all hope of discovering a place for proper human rest and for the passing of the night, but at least I hoped to light upon a dry bed of sand under some overhanging rock, or possibly of pine needles beneath closely woven trees, where one might get sleep until the rising of the sun.

As I still trudged, half expectant and half careless, a man came up behind me, walking quickly as do mountain men : for throughout the world (I cannot tell why) I have noticed that the men of the mountains walk quickly and in a sprightly manner, arching the foot, and with a light and general gait as though the hills were waves and as though they were in thought springing upon the crests of them. This is true of all mountaineers. They are but few.

This man, I say, came up behind me and asked me whether I were going towards a certain town of which he gave me the name, but as I had not so much as heard of this town I told him I knew nothing of it. I had no map, for there was no good map of that district, and a bad map is worse than none. I knew the names of no towns except the large towns on the coast. So I said to him :

"I cannot tell anything about this town, I am not making towards it. But I desire to reach the sea

¹ From *On Nothing*.

coast, which I know to be many hours away, and I had hoped to sleep overnight under some roof or at least in some cavern, and to start with the early morning ; but here I am, at the end of the night, without repose and wondering whether I can go on."

He answered me :

"It is four hours to the sea coast, but before you reach it you will find a lane branching to the right, and if you will go up it (for it climbs the hill) you will find a hermitage. Now by the time you are there the hermit will be risen."

"Will he be at his prayers ? " said I.

"He says no prayers to my knowledge," said my companion lightly ; "for he is not a hermit of that kind. Hermits are many and prayers are few. But you will find him bustling about, and he is a very hospitable man. Now as it so happens that the road to the sea coast bends here round along the foot of the hills, you will, in his company, perceive the port below you and the populace and the high road, and yet you will be saving a good hour in distance of time, and will have ample rest before reaching your vessel, if it is a vessel indeed that you intend to take."

When he had said these things I thanked him and gave him a bit of sausage and went along my way, for as he had walked faster than me before our meeting and while I was still in the dumps, so now I walked faster than him, having received good news.

All happened just as he had described. The dawn broke behind me over the noble but sedate peaks of the Apennines ; it first defined the heights against the growing colours of the sun, it next produced a general warmth and geniality in the air about me ; it last displayed the downward opening of the valley, and, very far off, a plain that sloped towards the sea.

Invigorated by the new presence of the day I went forward more rapidly, and came at last to a place where a sculptured panel made out of marble, very clever and modern, and representing a mystery, marked the division between two ways ; and I took

the lane to my right as my companion of the night hours had advised me.

For perhaps a mile or a little more the lane rose continually between rough walls intercepted by high backs of thorn, with here and there a vineyard, and as it rose one had between the branches of the wall glimpses of an ever-growing sea : for, as one rose, the sea became a broader and a broader belt, and the very distant islands, which at first had been but little clouds along the horizon, stood out and became parts of the landscape, and, as it were, framed all the bay.

Then at last, when I had come to the height of the hill, to where it turned a corner and ran level along the escarpment of the cliffs that dominated the sea plain, I saw below me a considerable stretch of country, between the fall of the ground and the distant shore, and under the daylight which was now full and clear one could perceive that all this plain was packed with an intense cultivation, with houses, happiness and men.

Far off, a little to the northward, lay the mass of a town ; and stretching out into the Mediterranean with a gesture of command and of desire were the new arms of the harbour.

To see such things filled me with a complete content. I know not whether it be the effect of long vigil, or whether it be the effect of contrast between the darkness and the light, but certainly to come out of a lonely night spent on the mountains, down with the sunlight into the civilization of the plain, is, for any man that cares to undergo the suffering and the consolation, as good as any experience that life affords. Hardly had I so conceived the view before me when I became aware, upon my right, of a sort of cavern, or rather a little and carefully minded shrine, from which a greeting proceeded.

I turned round and saw there a man of no great age and yet of a venerable appearance. He was perhaps fifty-five years old, or possibly a little less, but he had let his grey-white hair grow longish and his beard was

very ample and fine. It was he that had addressed me. He sat dressed in a long gown in a modern and rather luxurious chair at a low long table of chestnut wood, on which he had placed a few books, which I saw were in several languages and two of them not only in English, but having upon them the mark of an English circulating library which did business in the great town at our feet. There was also upon the table a breakfast ready of white bread and honey, a large brown coffee-pot, two white cups, and some goat's milk in a bowl of silver. This meal he asked me to share.

"It is my custom," he said, "when I see a traveller coming up my mountain road to get out a cup and plate for him, or, if it is midday, a glass. At evening, however, no one ever comes."

"Why not?" said I.

"Because," he answered, "this lane goes but a few yards further round the edge of the cliff, and there it ends in a precipice; the little platform where we are is all but the end of the way. Indeed, I chose it upon that account, seeing, when I first came here, that from its height and isolation it was well fitted for my retreat."

I asked him how long ago that was, and he said nearly twenty years. For all that time, he added, he had lived there, going down into the plain but once or twice in a season and having for his rare companions those who brought him food and the peasants on such days as they toiled up to work at their plots towards the summit; also, from time to time, a chance traveller like myself. But these, he said, made but poor companions, for they were usually such as had missed their way at the turning and arrived at that high place of his out of breath and angry. I assured him that this was not my case, for a man had told me in the night how to find his hermitage and I had come of set purpose to see him. At this he smiled.

We were now seated together at table eating and talking so, when I asked him whether he had a reputation

for sanctity and whether the people brought him food. He answered with a little hesitation that he had a reputation, he thought, for necromancy rather than anything else, and that upon this account it was not always easy to persuade a messenger to bring him the books in French and English which he ordered from below, though these were innocent enough, being, as a rule, novels written by women or academicians, records of travel, the classics of the eighteenth century, or the biographies of aged statesmen. As for food, the people of the place did indeed bring it to him, but not, as in an idyll, for courtesy; contrariwise, they demanded heavy payment, and his chief difficulty was with bread; for stale bread was intolerable to him. In the matter of religion he would not say that he had none, but rather that he had several religions; only at this season of the year, when everything was fresh, pleasant and entertaining, he did not make use of any of them, but laid them all aside. As this last saying of his had no meaning for me I turned to another matter and said to him:

"In any solitude contemplation is the chief business of the soul. How, then, do you, who say you practise no rites, fill up your loneliness here?"

In answer to this question he became more animated, spoke with a sort of laugh in his voice, and seemed as though he were young again and as though my question had aroused a whole lifetime of good memories.

"My contemplation," he said, not without large gestures, "is this wide and prosperous plain below: the great city with its harbours and ceaseless traffic of ships, the roads, the houses building, the fields yielding every year to husbandry, the perpetual activities of men. I watch my kind and I glory in them, too far off to be disturbed by the friction of individuals, yet near enough to have a daily companionship in the spectacle of so much life. The mornings, when they are all at labour, I am inspired

by their energy ; in the noons and afternoons I feel a part of their patient and vigorous endurance ; and when the sun broadens near the rim of the sea at evening, and all work ceases, I am filled with their repose. The lights along the harbour front in the twilight and on into the darkness remind me of them when I can no longer see their crowds and movements, and so does the music which they love to play in their recreation after the fatigues of the day, and the distant songs which they sing far into the night.

" I was about thirty years of age, and had seen (in a career of diplomacy) many places and men ; I had a fortune quite insufficient for a life among my equals. My youth had been, therefore, anxious, humiliated, and worn when, upon a feverish and unhappy holiday taken from the capital of this state, I came by accident to the cave and platform which you see. It was one of those days in which the air exhales revelation, and I clearly saw that happiness inhabited the mountain corner. I determined to remain for ever in so rare a companionship, and from that day she has never abandoned me. For a little while I kept a touch with the world by purchasing those newspapers in which I was reported shot by brigands or devoured by wild beasts, but the amusement soon wearied me, and now I have forgotten the very names of my companions."

We were silent then until I said : " But some day you will die here all alone."

" And why not ? " he answered calmly. " It will be a nuisance for those who find me, but I shall be indifferent altogether."

" That is blasphemy," says I.

" So says the priest of St. Anthony," he immediately replied—but whether as a reproach, an argument, or a mere commentary I could not

In a little while he advised
plain before the heat should

I left him, therefore, reading a book of Jane Austen's and I have never seen him since.

Of the many strange men I have met in my travels he was one of the most strange and not the least fortunate. Every word I have written about him is true.

THE OLD THINGS¹

THOSE who travel about England for their pleasure, or, for that matter, about any part of Western Europe, rightly associate with such travel the pleasure of history ; for history adds to a man, giving him, as it were, a great memory of things—like a human memory, but stretched over a far longer space than that of one human life. It makes him, I do not say wise and great, but certainly in communion with wisdom and greatness.

It adds also to the soil he treads, for to this it adds meaning. How good it is when you come out of Tewkesbury by the Cheltenham road to look upon those fields to the left and know that they are not only pleasant meadows, but also the place in which a great battle of the mediæval monarchy was decided, or as you stand by that ferry, which is not known enough to Englishman (for it is one of the most beautiful things in England), and look back and see Tewkesbury Tower, framed between tall trees over the level of the Severn, to see also the Abbey buildings in your eye of the mind—a great mass of similar stone with solid Norman walls, stretching on hugely to the right of the Minster.

All this historical sense and the desire to marry History with Travel is very fruitful and nourishing, but there is another interest, allied to it, which is very nearly neglected, and which is yet in a way more fascinating and more full of meaning. This interest

¹ From *First and Last*.

is the interest in such things as lie behind recorded history, and have survived into our own times. For underneath the general life of Europe, with its splendid epic of great Rome turned Christian, crusading, discovering, furnishing the springs of the Renaissance, and flowering at last materially into this stupendous knowledge of to-day, the knowledge of all the Arts, the power to construct and to do—underneath all that is the foundation on which Europe is built, the stem from which Europe springs; and that stem is far, far older than any recorded history, and far, far more vital than any of the phenomena which recorded history presents.

Recorded history for this island and for Northern France and for the Rhine Valley is a matter of two thousand years; for the Western Mediterranean of three; but the things of which I speak are to be reckoned in tens of thousands of years. Their interest does not lie only nor even chiefly in things that have disappeared. It is indeed a great pleasure to rummage in the earth and find polished stones wrought by men who came so many centuries before us, and of whose blood we certainly are; and it is a great pleasure to find, or to guess that we find, under Canterbury the piles of a lake or marsh dwelling, proving that Canterbury has been there from all time; and that the apparently defenceless Valley City was once chosen as an impregnable site, when the water meadows of the Stour were impassable as marsh, or with difficulty passable as a shallow lagoon. And it is delightful to stand on the earthwork a few miles west and to say to oneself (as one can say with a fair certitude), "Here was the British camp defending the south-east; here the tenth legion charged." All these are pleasant, but more pleasant, I think, to follow the thing where it actually survives.

Consider the track-ways, for instance. How rich is England in these! No other part of Europe will afford the traveller so permanent and so fascinating a problem. Elsewhere Rome hardened and

straightened every barbaric trail until the original line and level disappeared ; but in this distant province of Britain she could only afford just so much energy as made them a foothold for her soldiery ; and all over England you can go, if you choose, foot by foot, along the ancient roads that were made by the men of your blood before they had heard of brick or of stone or of iron or of written laws.

I wonder that more men do not set out to follow, let us say, the Fosse-Way. There it runs right across Western England from the south-west to the north-east in a line direct yet sinuous, characters which are the very essence of a savage trail. It is a modern road for many miles, and you are tramping, let us say, along the Cotswold on a hard metalled modern English highway, with milestones and notices from the County Council telling you that the culverts will not bear a steam-engine, if so be you were to travel on one. Then suddenly this road comes up against a cross-road and apparently ceases, making what map draughtsmen call a " T " ; but right in the same line you see a gate, and beyond it a farm lane, and so you follow. You come to a spinney where a ride has been cut through by the woodreeve, and it is all in the same line. The Fosse-Way turns into a little path, but you are still on it ; it curves over a marshy brook valley, picking out the firm land, and as you go you see old stones put there heaven knows how many (or how few) generations ago—or perhaps yesterday, for the tradition remains, and the country folk strengthen their wet lands as they have strengthened them all these thousands of years ; you climb up out of that depression, you get you over a stile, and there you are again upon a lane. You follow that lane, and once more it stops dead. This time there is a field before you. No right of way, no trace of a path, nothing but grass rounded into those parallel ridges which mark the modern decay of the corn lands and pasture—alas !—taking the place of ploughing. Now your pleasure comes in casting about for the trail ;

you look back along the line of the Way ; you look forward in the same line till you find some indication, a boundary between two parishes, perhaps upon your map, or two or three quarries set together, or some other sign, and very soon you have picked up the line again.

So you go on mile after mile, and as you tread that line you have in the horizons that you see, in the very nature and feel of the soil beneath your feet, in the skies of England above you, the ancient purpose and soul of this Kingdom. Up this same line went the Clans marching when they were called northward to the host ; and up this went slow, creaking waggons with the lead of the Mendips or the tin of Cornwall or the gold of Wales.

And it is still there ; it is still used from place to place as a high road, it still lives in modern England. There are some of its peers, as for instance the Ermine Street, far more continuous, and affording problems more rarely ; others like the ridgeway of the Berkshire Downs, which Rome hardly touched, and of which the last two thousand years has, therefore, made hardly anything ; you may spend a delightful day piecing out exactly where it crossed the Thames, making your guess at it, and wondering as you sit there by Streatley Vicarage whether those islands did not form a natural weir below which lay the ford.

The roads are the most obvious things. There are many more ; for instance, thatch. The same laying of the straw in the same manner, with the same art, has continued, we may be certain, from a time long before the beginning of history. See how in the Fen Land they thatch with reeds, and how upon the Chalk Downs with straw from the Lowlands. I remember once being told of a record in a manor, which held of the Church and which lay upon the southern slope of the Downs, that so much was entered for " straw from the Lowlands " : then, years afterwards, when I had to thatch a Bethlehem in an orchard underneath tall elms—a pleasant place to write in, with the noise of

bees in the air—the man who came to thatch said to me: "We must have straw from the Lowlands; this upland straw is no good for thatching." Immediately when I heard him say this there was added to me ten thousand years. And I know another place in England, far distant from this, where a man said to me that if I wished to cross in a winter mist, as I had determined to do, Cross-Fell, that great summit of the Pennines, I must watch the drift of the snow, for there was no other guide to one's direction in such weather. And I remember another man in a little boat in the North Sea, as we came towards the Foreland, talking to me of the two tides, and telling me how if one caught the tide all the way up to Long Nose and then went round it on the end of the flood, one caught a new tide up London river, and so made two tides in one day. He spoke with the same pleasure that silly men show when they talk about an accumulation of money. He felt wealthy and proud from the knowledge, for by this knowledge he had two tides in one day. Now knowledge of this sort is older than ten thousand years; and so is the knowledge of how birds fly, and of how they call, and of how the weather changes with the moon.

Very many things a man might add to the list that I am making. Dew-pans are older than the language or the religion; and the finding of water with a stick; and the catching of that smooth animal, the mole; and the building of flints into mortar, which if one does it in the old way (as you may see at Pevensy) the work lasts for ever, but if you do it in any new way it does not last ten years; then there is the knowledge of planting during the crescent part of the month, but not before the new moon shows; and there is the influence of the moon on cider, and to a less extent upon the brewing of ale; and talking of ale, the knowledge of how ale should be drawn from the brewing just when a man can see his face without mist upon the surface of the hot brew. And there is the knowledge of how to bank rivers, which is called

“throwing the rives” in the South, but in the Fen Land by some other name ; and how to bank them so that they do not silt, but scour themselves. There are these things and a thousand others. All are immemorial.

MR. THE DUKE: THE MAN OF MALPLAQUET¹

ON the field of Malplaquet, that battlefield, I met a man.

He was pointed out to me as a man who drove travellers to Bavai. His name was Mr. The Duke, and he was very poor.

If he comes across these lines (which is exceedingly unlikely) I offer him my apologies. Anyhow, I can write about him freely, for he is not rich, and, what is more, the laws of his country permit the telling of the truth about our fellow-men, even when they are rich.

Mr. The Duke was of some years, and his colour was that of cedar wood. I met him in his farmyard, and I said to him :

“Is it you, sir, that drives travellers to Bavai ? ”

“No,” said he.

Accustomed by many years of travel to this type of response, I continued :

“How much do you charge ? ”

“Two francs fifty,” said he. •

“I will give you three francs,” I said, and when I had said this he shook his head and replied :

“You fall at an evil moment ; I was about to milk the cows.” Having said this he went to harness the horse.

When the horse was harnessed to his little cart (it was an extremely small horse, full of little bones and

¹ From *First and Last*.

white in colour, with one eye stronger than the other) he gave it to his little daughter to hold, and himself sat down to table, proposing a meal.

"It is but humble fare," he said, "for we are poor."

This sounded familiar to me; I had both read and heard it before. The meal was of bread and butter, pasty and beer, for M. lplaquet is a country of beer and not of wine.

As he sat at the table the old man pointed out to me that contraband across the Belgian frontier, which is close by, was no longer profitable.

"The Fraud," he said, "is no longer a living for anyone."

Upon that frontier contraband is called "The Fraud"; it holds an honourable place as a career.

"The Fraud," he continued, "has gone long ago; it has burst. It is no longer to be pursued. There is not even any duty upon apples. . . . But there is a duty upon pears. Had I a son I would not put him into The Fraud. . . . Sometimes there is just a chance here and there. . . . One can pick up an occasion. But take it all in all" (and here he wagged his head solemnly), "there is nothing in it any more."

I said that I had no experience of contraband professionally, but that I knew a very honest man who lived by it in the country of Andorra, and that according to my morals a man had a perfect right to run the risk and take his chance, for there was no contract between him and the power he was trying to get round. This announcement pleased the old gentleman, but it did not grip his mind. He was of your practical sort. He was almost a Pragmatist. Abstractions wearied him. He put no faith in the reality of ideas. I think he was a nominalist like Abelard: and whatever excuse you may make for him, Abelard was a Nominalist right enough, for it was the intellectual thing to be at the time, though St. Bernard utterly confuted him in arguments of enormous length and incalculable boredom.

The old man, then, I say, would have nothing to do

with first principles, and he reasserted his position that, in the concrete, in the existent world, The Fraud no longer paid.

This said for the sixth or seventh time, he drank some brandy to put heart into him and climbed up into his little cart, I by his side. He hit the white horse with a stick, making at the same time an extraordinary shrill noise with his mouth, like a siren, and the horse began to slop and sludge very dolefully towards Bavai.

"This horse," said Mr. The Duke, "is a wonderfully good horse. He goes like the wind. He is of Arab extraction, and comes from Africa." -

With these words he gave the horse another huge blow with his stick, and once more emitted his piercing cry. The horse went neither faster nor slower than before, and seemed very indifferent to the whole performance.

"He is from Africa," said Mr. The Duke again meditatively. "Do you know Africa?"

Africa with the French populace means Algiers. I answered that I knew it, and that in particular I knew the road southward from Constantine. At this he looked very pleased, and said :

"I was a soldier in Africa. I deserted seven times."

To this I made no answer. I did not know how he wanted me to take it, so I waited until he should speak again, which he soon did, and said :

"The last time I deserted I was free for a year and a half. I used to conduct beasts ; that was my trade. When they caught me I was to have been shot. I was saved by the tears of a woman !"

Having said this the old man pulled out a very small pipe and filled it with exceedingly black tobacco. He lit it, and then he began talking again rather more excitedly.

"It is a terrible thing and an unhappy thing none the less," he went on, "that a man should be taken out to be shot and should be saved by the tears of a

woman." Then he added, "Of what use are wars? How foolish it is that men should kill each other! If there were a war I would not fight. Would you?"

I said I thought I would; but whether I should like to or not would depend upon the war.

He was eager to contradict and to tell me that war was wrong and stupid. Having behind him the logical training of fifteen Christian centuries, he was in no way muddle-headed upon the matter. He saw very well that his doctrine meant that it was wrong to have a country, and wrong to love it, and that patriotism was all bosh, and that no ideal was worth physical pain or trouble. To such conclusions had he come at the end of his life.

The white horse meanwhile slouched; Bavai grew somewhat nearer as we sat in silence after his last sentence. He was turning many things over in his mind. He veered off to political economy.

"When the rich man at the Manufactory here, the place where they sell phosphates for the land, when he stands beer to all the workmen and to the countryside, I always say, 'Fools! All this will be put on to the cost of the phosphates; they will cost you more!'"

Mr. The Duke did not accept John Stuart Mill's proposition upon the cost of production nor the general theories of Ricardo upon which Mill's propositions were based. In his opinion rent was a factor in the cost of production, for he told me that butter had gone up because the price of land was rising near the towns. In what he next said I found out that he was not a Collectivist, for he said a man should own enough to live upon, but he said that this was impossible if rich people were allowed to live. I asked him what the politics of the countryside were and how people voted. He said:

"The politicians trick the people. They are a heap of worthlessness."

I asked him if he voted, and he said "Yes." He

said there was only one way to vote, but I did not understand what this meant.

Had time served I should have asked him further questions—upon the nature of the soul, its ultimate fate, the origin of man and his destiny, whether mortal or immortal ; the proper constitution of the State, the choice of the legislator, the prince, and the magistrate ; the function of art, whether it is subsidiary or primary in human life ; the family ; marriage. Upon the State he had already informed me, and also upon the institution of property, and upon his view of armies. Upon all those other things he would equally have given me a clear reply, for he was a man that knew his own mind, and that is more than most people can say.

But we were now in Bavai, and I had no time to discover more. We drank together before we parted, and I was very pleased to see the honest look in his face. With more leisure and born to greater opportunities he would have been talked about, this Man of Malplaquet. He had come to his odd conclusions as the funny people do in Scandinavia and in Russia, and among the rich intellectuals and usurers in London and Berlin ; but he was a jollier man than they are, for he could drive a horse and lie about it, and he could also milk a cow. As we parted he used a phrase that wounded me, and which I had only heard once before in my life. He said :

“ We shall never see each other again ! ”

Another man had once said this thing to me before. This man was a farmer in the Northumbrian hills, who walked with me a little way in the days when I was going over Carter Fell to find the Scots people, many, many years ago. He also said : “ We shall never meet again ! ”

ON THE SOURCES OF RIVERS¹

THERE are certain customs in man the permanence of which gives infinite pleasure. When the mood of the schools is against them these customs lie in wait beneath the floors of society, but they never die, and when a decay in pedantry or in despotism or in any other evil and inhuman influence permits them to reappear they reappear.

One of these customs is the religious attachment of man to isolated high places, peaks, and single striking hills. On these he must build shrines, and though he is a little furtive about it nowadays, yet the instinct is there, strong as ever. I have not often come to the top of a high hill with another man but I have seen him put a few stones together when he got there, or, if he had not the moral courage so to satisfy his soul, he would never fail on such an occasion to say something ritual and quasi-religious, even if it were only about the view ; and another instinct of the same sort is the worship of the sources of rivers.

The Iconoclast and the people whose pride it is that their senses are dead will see in a river nothing more than so much moisture gathered in a narrow place and falling as the mystery of gravitation inclines it. Their mood is the mood of that gentleman who despaired and wrote :

A cloud's a lot of vapour,
The sky's a lot of air,
And the sea's a lot of water
That happens to be there.

¹ From *First and Last*.

You cannot get further down than that. When you have got as far down as that all is over. Luckily God still keeps His mysteries going for you, and you can't get rid, even in that mood, of the certitude that you yourself exist and that things outside of you are outside of you. But when you get into that modern mood you do lose the personality of everything else, and you forget the sanctity of river heads.

You have lost a great deal when you have forgotten that, and it behoves you to recover what you have lost as quickly as possible, which is to be done in this way: Visit the source of some famous stream and think about it. There was a Scotsman once who discovered the sources of the Nile, to the lasting advantage of mankind and the permanent glory of his native land. He thought the source of the Nile looked rather like the sources of the Till or the Tweed or some such river of Thule. He has been ridiculed for saying this, but he was mystically very right. The source of the greatest of rivers, since it was sacred to him, reminded him of the sacred things of his home.

When I consider the sources of rivers which I have seen, there is not one, I think, which I do not remember to have had about it an influence of awe. Not only because one could in imaginings see the kingdoms of the cities which it was to visit and the way in which it would bind them all together in one province and one story, but also simply because it was an origin.

The sources of the Rhone are famous: the Rhone comes out of a glacier through a sort of ice cave, and if it were not for an enormous hotel quite four-square it would be as lonely a place as there is in Europe, and as remarkable a beginning for a great river as could anywhere be found. Nor, when you come to think of it, does any European river have such varied fortunes as the Rhone. It feeds such different religions and looks on such diverse landscapes. It makes Geneva and it makes Avignon; it changes in colour and in the nature of its going as it goes. It sees new products appearing continually on its journey

until it comes to olives, and it flows past the beginning of human cities, when it reflects the huddle of old Arles.

The sources of the Garonne are well known. The Garonne rises by itself in a valley from which there is no issue, like the fabled valleys shut in by hills on every side. And if it were anything but the Garonne it would not be able to escape : it would lie imprisoned there for ever. Being the Garonne, it tunnels a way for itself right under the High Pyrenees and comes out again on the French side. There are some that doubt this, but then there are people who would doubt anything.

The sources of the River Arun are not so famous as these two last, and it is a good thing, for they are to be found in one of the loneliest places within an hour of London that any man can imagine, and if you were put down there upon a windy day you would think yourself upon the moors. There is nothing whatsoever near you at the beginnings of the little sacred stream.

Thames had a source once which was very famous. The water came out plainly at a fountain under a bleak wood just west of the Fosse Way, under which it ran by a culvert, a culvert at least as old as the Romans. But when about a hundred years ago people began to improve the world in those parts, they put up a pumping station and they pumped Thames dry—since which time its gods have deserted the river.

The sources of the Ribble are in a lonely place up in a corner of the hills where everything has strange shapes and where the rocks make one think of trolls. The great frozen Whernside stands up above it, and Ingleborough Hill, which is like no other hill in England, but like the flat-topped Mesas which you have in America, or (as those who have visited it tell me) like the flat hills of South Africa ; and a little way off on the other side is Pen-y-ghent, or words to that effect. The little River Ribble rises under such

enormous guardianship. It rises quite clean and single in the shape of a little spring upon the hillside, and too few people know it. The other river that flows east while the Ribble flows west is the River Ayr. It rises in a curious way, for it imitates the Garonne, and finding itself blocked by limestone burrows underneath at a place called Malham Tarn, after which it has no more trouble.

The River Severn, the River Wye, and a third unimportant river, or at least important only for its beauty (and who would insist on that?) rise all close together on the skirts of Plinlimmon, and the smallest of them has the most wonderful rising, for it falls through the gorge of Llygnant, which looks like, and perhaps is, the deepest cleft in this island, or, at any rate, the most unexpected. And a fourth source on the mountain, a tarn below its summit, is the source of Rheidol, which has a short but adventurous life like Achilles.

There is one source in Europe that is properly dealt with, and where the religion due to the sources of rivers has free play, and this is the source of the Seine. It comes out upon the northern side of the hills which the French call the Hills of Gold, in a country of pasturage and forest, very high up above the world and thinly peopled. The River Seine appears there in a sort of miraculous manner, pouring out of a grotto, and over this grotto the Parisians have built a votive statue; and there is yet another of the hundred thousand things that nobody knows.

THE EYE-OPENERS¹

WITHOUT any doubt whatsoever, the one characteristic of the towns is the lack of reality in the impressions of the many: now we live in towns: and posterity will be astounded at us! It isn't only that we get our impressions for the most part as imaginary pictures called up by printer's ink—that would be bad enough; but by some curious perversion of the modern mind, printer's ink ends by actually preventing one from seeing things that are there; and sometimes, when one says to another who has not travelled, "Travel!" one wonders whether, after all, if he does travel, he will see the things before his eyes? If he does, he will find a new world; and there is more to be discovered in this fashion to-day than ever there was.

I have sometimes wished that every Anglo-Saxon who from these shores has sailed and seen for the first time the other Anglo-Saxons in New York or Melbourne, would write in quite a short letter what he really felt. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred men only write what they have read before they started, just as Rousseau in an eighteenth-century village believed that every English yokel could vote and that his vote conveyed a high initiative, making and unmaking the policy of the State; or just as people, hearing that the birth-rate of France is low, travel in that country and say they can see no children—

¹ From *First and Last*.

though they would hardly say it about Sussex or Cumberland where the birth-rate is lower still.

What travel does in the way of pleasure (the providing of new and fresh sensations, and the expansion of experience), that it ought to do in the way of knowledge. It ought to and it does, with the wise, provide a complete course of unlearning the wretched tags with which the sham culture of our great towns has filled us. For instance, of Barbary—the lions do not live in deserts; they live in woods. The peasants of Barbary are not Semitic in appearance or in character; Barbary is full to the eye, not of Arab and Oriental buildings—they are not striking—but of great Roman monuments: they are altogether the most important things in the place. Barbary is not hot, as a whole: most of Barbary is extremely cold between November and March. The inhabitants of Barbary do not like a wild life, they are extremely fond of what civilization can give them, such as *crème de menthe*, rifles, good waterworks, maps, and railways: only they would like to have these things without the bother of strict laws and of the police, and so forth. Travel in Barbary with seeing eyes and you find out all this new truth.

Now it took the French forty years and more before each of these plain facts (and I have only cited half a dozen out of as many hundred) got into their letters and their print: they have not yet got into the letters and the print of other nations. But an honest man travelling in Barbary on his own account would pick up every one of these truths in two or three days, except the one about the lions; to pick up that truth you must go to the very edge of the country, for the lion is a shy beast and withdraws from men.

The wise man who really wants to see things as they are and to understand them, does not say: "Here I am on the burning soil of Africa." He says: "Here I am stuck in a snowdrift and the train twelve hours late"—as it was (with me in it) near Sétif in January 1905. He does not say as he looks on the peasant at

his plough outside Batna : "Observe yon Semite ! " He says : "That man's face is exactly like the face of a dark Sussex peasant, only a little leaner." He does not say : "See those wild sons of the desert ! How they must hate the new artificial world around them ! " Contrariwise, he says : "See those four Mohammedans playing cards with a French pack of cards and drinking liqueurs in the café ! See, they have ordered more liqueurs ! " He does not say : "How strange and terrible a thing the railway must be to them ! " He says : "I wish I was rich enough to travel first, for the natives pouring in and out of this third-class carriage, jabbering like monkeys, and treading on my feet, disturb my tranquillity. Some hundreds must have got in and out during the last fifty miles ! "

In other words, the wise man has permitted eye-openers to rain upon him their full, beneficent, and sacramental influence. And if a man in travelling will always maintain his mind ready for what he really sees and hears, he will become a whole nest of Colum-buses discovering a perfectly interminable series of new worlds.

A man can only talk of what he himself knows. Let me give further examples. I had always heard until I visited the Pyrenees how French civilization (especially in the matter of roads, motors, and things like that) went up to the "Spanish" frontier and then stopped dead. It doesn't. The change is at the Aragonese frontier. On the Basque third of the frontier the people are just as active and fond of wealth, and of scraping of stone and of cleanliness, and of drawing straight lines, to the north as to the south of it. They are all one people, as industrious, as thrifty, and as prosperous as the Scots. So are the Catalans one people, and you get much the same sort of advantages and disadvantages (apart from the effect of government) with the Catalans to the north as with the Catalans to the south of the border.

So with religion. I had thought to find the Spanish

churches crowded. I found just the contrary. It was the French churches that were crowded, not the Spanish; and the difference between the truth—what one really sees and hears—and the printed legend happens to be very subtly illustrated in this case of religion. The French have inherited (and are by this time used to, and have, perhaps grown fond of) a big religious debate. Those who side with the national religion and tradition emphasize their opinion in every possible way—so do their opponents. You pick up two newspapers from Toulouse, for instance, and it is quite on the cards that the leading article of each will be a disquisition upon the philosophy of religion, the one, the *Depêche* of Toulouse, militantly, and often insolently atheist; the other as militantly Catholic.

You don't get that in Pamplona, and you don't get it in Saragossa. What you get there is a profound dislike of being interfered with, ancient and lazy customs, wealth retained by the chapters, the monasteries, and the colleges, and with all this a curious, all-pervading indifference.

One might end this little train of thought by considering a converse test of what the eye-opener is in travel; and that test is to talk to foreigners when they first come to England and see how they tend to discover in England what they have read of at home instead of what they really see. There have been very few fogs in London of late, but your foreigner nearly always finds London foggy. Kent does not show along its main railway line the evidence of agricultural depression: it is like a garden. Yet, in a very careful and thorough French book just published by a French traveller, his bird's-eye view of the country as he went through Kent just after landing would make you think the place a desert; he seems to have thought the hedges a sign of agricultural decay. The same foreigner will discover a plebeian character in the Commons and an aristocratic one in the House of Lords, though he shall have heard but four speeches

in each, and though every one of the eight speeches shall have been delivered by members of one family group closely intermarried, wealthy, titled, and perhaps (who knows?) of some lineage as well.

The moral is that one should tell the truth to oneself, and look out for it outside one. It is quite as novel and as entertaining as the discovery of the North Pole—or, in case that has come off (as some believe), the discovery of the South Pole.

THE LITTLE OLD MAN¹

IT was in the year 1888 ("O noctes coenasque deum!"—a tag) that, upon one of the southern hills of England, I came quite unexpectedly across a little old man who sat upon a bench that was there and looked out to sea.

Now you will ask me why a bench was there, since benches are not commonly found upon the high slopes of our southern hills, of which the poet has well said, the writer has well written, and the singer has well sung :—

The Southern Hills and the South Sea
They blow such gladness into me
That when I get to Burton Sands
And smell the smell of the home lands,
My heart is all renewed, and fills
With the Southern Sea and the South Hills.

True, benches are not common there. I know of but one, all the way from the meeting place of England, which is upon Salisbury Plain, to that detestable suburb of Eastbourne by Beachy Head. Nay, even that one of which I speak has disappeared. For an honest man being weary of labour and yet desiring firewood one day took it away, and the stumps only now remain at the edge of a wood, a little to the south of No Man's Land.

Well, at any rate, upon this bench there sat in the year 1888 a little old man, and he was looking out to

¹ From *On Everything*.

sea ; for from this place the English Channel spreads out in a vast band 600 feet below one, and the shore perhaps five miles away ; it looks broader than any sea in the world, broader than the Mediterranean from the hills of Alba Longa, and broader than the Irish Sea from the summit of the Welsh Mountains : though why this is so I cannot tell. The little old man treated my coming as though it was an expected thing, and before I had spoken to him long assured me that this view gave him complete content.

"I could sit here," he said, "and look at the Channel and consider the nature of this land for ever and for ever." Now though words like this meant nothing in so early a year as the year 1888, yet I was willing to pursue them because there was, in the eyes of the little old man, a look of such wisdom, kindness, and cunning as seemed to me a marriage between those things native to the earth and those things which are divine. I mean, that he seemed to me to have all that the good animals have, which wander about in the brushwood and are happy all their lives, and also all that we have, of whom it has been well said that of every thing which runs or creeps upon earth, man is the fullest of sorrow. For this little old man seemed to have (at least such was my fantastic thought in that early year) a complete acquiescence in the soil and the air that had bred him, and yet something common to mankind and a full foreknowledge of death.

His face was of the sort which you will only see in England, being quizzical and vivacious, a little pinched together, and the hair on his head was a close mass of grey curls. His eyes were as bright as are harbour lights when they are first lit towards the closing of our winter evenings : they shone upon the daylight. His mouth was firm, but even in repose it permanently, though very slightly, smiled.

I asked him why he took such pleasure in the view. He said it was because everything he saw was part of his own country, and that just as some holy men said

that to be united with God, our Author, was the end and summit of man's effort, so to him who was not very holy, to mix, and have communion, with his own sky and earth was the one banquet that he knew: he also told me (which cheered me greatly) that alone of all the appetites this large affection for one's own land does not grow less with age, but rather increases and occupies the soul. He then made me a discourse as old men will, which ran somewhat thus:—

“Each thing differs from all others, and the more you know, the more you desire or worship one thing, the more does that stand separate: and this is a mystery, for in spite of so much individuality all things are one. . . . How greatly out of all the world stands out this object of my adoration and of my content! You will not find the like of it in all the world! It is England, and in the love of it I forget all enmities and all despairs.”

He then bade me look at a number of little things around, and see how particular they were: the way in which the homes of Englishmen hid themselves, and how, although a great town lay somewhat to our right not half a march away, there was all about us silence, self-possession, and repose. He bade me also note the wind-blown thorns, and the yew-trees, bent over from centuries of the south-west wind, and the short, sweet grass of the Downs, untilled and unenclosed, and the long waves of woods which rich men had stolen and owned, and which yet in a way were property for us all.

“There is more than one,” said I in anger, “who so little understands his land that he will fence the woods about and prevent the people from coming and going: making a show of them, like some dirty town-bred fellow who thinks that the Downs and the woods are his villa garden, bought with gold.

The little old man wagged his crooked forefinger in front of his face and looked exceedingly knowing with his bright eyes, and said: “Time will tame all that! Not they can digest the county, but the county them

Their palings shall be burnt upon cottage hearths, and their sons shall go back to be lackeys as their fathers were. But this landscape shall always remain."

Then he bade me note the tides and the many harbours ; and how there was an inner and an outer tide, and the great charge between neaps and springs, and how there were no great rivers, but every harbour stood right upon the sea, and how for the knowledge of each of these harbours even the life of a man was too short. There was no other country, he said, which was thus held and embraced by the mastery of the Atlantic tide. For the patient Dutch have their towns inland upon broad rivers and ships sail up to quays between houses or between green fields ; and the Spaniards and the French (he said) are, for half their nature and tradition, taught by a tideless sea, but we all around have the tide everywhere, and with the tide there comes to character salt and variety, adventure, peril, and change.

" But this," I said, " is truer of the Irish."

He answered : " Yes, but I am talking of my own soil."

Then when he had been silent for a little while he began talking of the roads, which fitted into the folds of the hills, and of the low, long window panes of men's homes, of the deep thatch which covered them, and of that savour of fullness and inheritance which lay fruitfully over all the land. It gave him the pleasure to talk of these things which it gives men who know particular wines to talk of those wines, or men who have enjoyed some great risk together to talk together of their dangers overcome.

It gave him the same pleasure to talk of England and of his corner of England that it gives some venerable people sometimes to talk of those whom they have loved in youth, or that it gives the true poets to mouth the lines of their immortal peers. It was a satisfaction to hear him say the things he said, because one knew that as he said them his soul was filled.

He spoke also of horses and of the birds native to our Downs, but not of pheasants, which he hated and would not speak to me about at all. He spoke of dogs, and told me how the dogs of one countryside were the fruits of it, just as its climate and its contours were ; notably the spaniel, which was designed or bred by the mighty power of Amberley Wildbrook, which breeds all watery things. He showed me how the plover went with the waste flats of Arun and of Adur and of Ouse, and he showed me why the sheep were white and why they bunched together in a herd. "Because," he said, "the chalk pits and the clouds behind the Down are wide patches of white ; so must the sheep be also." For a little he would have told me that the very names of places, nay, the religion itself, were grown right out of the sacred earth which was our Mother.

These truths and many more I should have learned from him, these extravagances and some few others I should have whimsically heard, had I not (since I was young) attempted argument and said to him : "But all these things change, and what we love so much is, after all, only what we have known in our short time, and it is our souls within that lend divinity to any place, for, save within the soul, all is subject to time."

He shook his head determinedly and like one who knows. He did assure me that in a subtle mastering manner the land that bore us made us ourselves, and was the major and the dominant power which moulded, as with firm hands, the clay of our being and which designed and gave us, and continued in us, all the form in which we are.

"You cannot tell this," I said, "and neither can I ; it is all guesswork to the brevity of man."

"You are wrong," he answered quietly. "I have watched these things for quite three thousand years." And before I had time to gasp at that word he had disappeared.

A CROSSING OF THE HILLS¹

WHEN it was nearly noon my companion said to me :

“By what sign or track do you propose to cross the mountains ? ” For the mountains here seem higher than any of the highest clouds : the valley beneath them is broad and full of fields : beyond, a long day off, stands in a huge white wall the Sierra del Cadi. Yet we must cross these hills if ever we were to see the secluded and little-known Andorrans. For the Andorrans live in a sort of cup fenced in on every side by the Pyrenees ; it was on this account that my companion asked me how I would cross over to their land and by what sign I should find my way.

When I had thought a little I answered :

“By none. I propose to go right up at them, and over unless I find some accident by which I am debarred.”

“Why, then,” said he, “let us strike up at once, walking steeply until we come into a new country.”

This advice was good, and so, though we had no longer any path, and though a mist fell upon us, we began walking upwards, and it was like going up a moor in the West Riding, except that it went on and on and on, hour after hour, and was so steep that now and then one had to use one's hands.

The mist was all around us ; it made a complete silence, and it drifted in the oddest way, making wisps of vapour quite close to our faces. Nor had we any

¹ *From On Everything.*

guide except the steepness of the hill. For it is a rule when you are caught in a storm or mist upon the hills, if you are going up, to go the steepest way, and though in such a fog this often took us over a knoll which we had to descend again, yet on the whole it proved a very good rule. It was perhaps the middle of the afternoon, we had been climbing some five hours, we had ascended some six thousand or seven thousand feet, when to our vast astonishment we stumbled upon a sort of road.

It must here be explained why we were astonished. The way we had come led nowhere ; there were no houses and no men. The Andorrans whom we were about to visit have no communication northward with the outer world except a thin wire leading over the hills, by which those who wish to telephone to them can do so ; and of all places in Europe, Andorra is the place out of which men least desire to get and to which men least desire to go. It is like that place beyond Death of which people say that it gives complete satisfaction and from which certainly no one makes any effort to escape, and yet to which no one is very anxious to go. When, therefore, we came to this road, beginning suddenly half way up a bare mountain and appearing unexplained through the mist, we were astonished.

It was embanked and entrenched and levelled as would be any great French military road near the frontier fortresses. There was a little runnel running underneath the road, conveying a mountain stream ; it was arched with great care, and the arch was made of good hewn stone well smoothed. But when we came right on to this road we found something more astonishing still : we found that it was but the simulacrum or ghost of a road. It was not metalled ; it was but the plan or trace or idea of a road. No horses had ever trod its soft earth, no wheels had ever made a rut in it. It had not been used at all. Grass covered it. The explanation of this astonishing sight we did not receive until we had spoken in their

own tongue the next day to the imperturbable Andorrans.

It was as though a school of engineers had been turned on here for fun, to practise the designing of a road in a place where land was valueless, upon the very summit of the world.

We two men, however, reasoned thus (and reasoned rightly as it turned out) :

"The tall and silent Andorrans in a fit of energy must have begun this road, though later in another fit they abandoned it. Therefore it will lead towards their country."

And as we were very tired of walking up a steep which had now lasted for so many hours, we determined to follow the large zigzags of this unknown and magic half-road, and so we did.

It was the oddest sensation in the world walking in the mist a mile and more above the habitations of men, upon unmetalled, common earth which yet had the exact shape of pavements, cuttings, and embankments upon either side, with no sort of clue as to where it led or as to why men began to make it, and still less of an argument as to why they had ceased.

It went up and up in great long turns and z's upon the face of the mountain, until at last it grew less steep ; the mist grew colder, and after a long flat I thought the land began to fall a little, and I said to my companion :

"We are over the watershed, and beneath us, miles beneath us, are the Andorrans."

When by the continuance of the fall of the land we were certain of this we took off our hats, in spite of the fog which still hung around us very wet and very cold and quite silent, and expected any moment a revelation.

We were not disappointed. Indeed, this attitude of the mind is never disappointed. Without a moment's warning the air all round us turned quite bright and warm, a strong gust blew through the

whirling vapour, and we saw through the veil of it the image of the sun. In a moment his full disc and warmth was on us. The clouds were torn up above us ; the air was immediately quite clear, and we saw before us, stamped suddenly upon the sight, a hundred miles of the Pyrenees.

They say that everything is in the mind. If that be true, then he and I saw in that moment a country which was never yet on earth, for it was a country which our minds had not yet conceived to be possible, and it was as new as though we had seen it after the disembodiment of the soul.

The evening sun from over Spain shone warm and low, and every conceivable colour of the purples and the browns filled up the mountain tangle, so that the marvel appeared as though it had been painted carefully in a minute way by a man's hand ; but the colours were filled with light, and so to fill colour with light is what art can never do. The main range ran out upon either side, and the foot-hills in long series of peaks and ridges fell beneath it, until, beyond, in what might have been sky or might have been earth, was the haze of the plains of Ebro.

"It is no wonder," said I to my companion, "that the Andorrans jealously preserve their land and have refused to complete this road."

When I had said that we went down the mountain-side. The lower our steps fell the more we found the wealth and the happiness of men. At last walls and ploughed land appeared. The fields grew deep, the trees more sturdy, and under the shelter of peaks, with which we had just been acquainted, but which after an hour or so of descent seemed hopelessly above us, ran rivers which were already tamed and put to a use. One could see mills standing upon them. So we went down and down.

There is no rejuvenescence like this entry into Andorra, and there is no other experience of the same sort, not even the finding of spring land after a month

of winter sea : that vision of brilliant fields coming down to meet one after the endless grey waste of the sea.

It was, I tell you again, a country completely new, and it might have been of another world, much better than our own.

So we came at last to the level of the valley, and the first thing we saw was a pig, and the second was a child, and the third was a woman. The pig ran at us : for he was lean. The child at first smiled at us because we were human beings, and then, divining that we were fiends who had violated his sacred home began to cry. The woman drove the pig from us and took in the child, and in great loneliness and very sad to be so received we went until we should find men and citizens, and these we found of our own size, upstanding and very dignified, and recognized them at once to be of the wealthy and reserved Andorrans. It was clear by their faces that the *lingua franca* was well known to them, so I said to the first in this universal tongue :

“ Sir, what is the name of this village ? ”

And he replied : “ It is Saldeu.” But this he said in his own language, which is somewhat more difficult to understand than the *lingua franca*.

“ I take it, therefore,” said I, “ that I am in the famous country of Andorra.”

To which he replied : “ You are not many miles from the very town itself : you approach Andorra ‘ the Old.’ ”

The meaning of this I did not at first exactly understand, but as we went on, the sun having now set, I said to my companion : “ Were not those epithets right which we attached to the Andorrans in our fancy before we attempted these enormous hills ? Were we not right to call them the smiling and the tall Andorrans ? ”

“ You are right,” he answered to me, thinking carefully over every word that he said. “ To call them

the secluded and the honourable Andorrans is to describe them in a few words."

We then continued our way down the darkening valley, whistling little English songs.

ON A GREAT WIND¹

IT is an old dispute among men, or rather a dispute as old as mankind, whether Will be a cause of things or no ; nor is there anything novel in these moderns who affirm that Will is nothing to the matter, save their ignorant belief that their affirmation is new.

The intelligent process whereby I know that Will not seems but is, and can alone be truly and ultimately a cause, is fed with stuff and strengthens sacramentally as it were, whenever I meet, and am made the companion of, a great wind.

It is not that this lively creature of God is indeed perfected with a soul ; this it would be superstition to believe. It has no more a person than any other of its material fellows, but in its vagary of way, in the largeness of its apparent freedom, in its rush of purpose, it seems to mirror the action of mighty spirit. When a great wind comes roaring over the eastern flats towards the North Sea, driving over the Fens and the Wringland, it is like something of this island that must go out and wrestle with the water, or play with it in a game or a battle ; and when, upon the western shores, the clouds come bowling up from the horizon, messengers, outriders, or comrades of a gale, it is something of the sea determined to possess the land. The rising and falling of such power, its hesitations, its renewed violence, its fatigue and final repose—all these arch symbols of a mind ; but more than

¹ From *First and Last*.

all the rest, its exultation ! It is the shouting and the hurraing of the wind that suits a man.

Note you, we have not many friends. The older we grow and the better we can sift mankind, the fewer friends we count, although man lives by friendship. But a great wind is every man's friend, and its strength is the strength of good-fellowship ; and even doing battle with it is something worthy and well chosen. If there is cruelty in the sea, and terror in high places, and malice lurking in profound darkness, there is no one of these qualities in the wind, but only power. Here is strength too full for such negations as cruelty, as malice, or as fear ; and that strength in a solemn manner proves and tests health in our own souls. For with terror (of the sort I mean—terror of the abyss or panic at remembered pain, and in general, a losing grip of the succours of the mind), and with malice, and with cruelty, and with all the forms of that evil which lies in wait for men, there is the savour of disease. It is an error to think of such things as power set up in equality against justice and right living. We were not made for them, but rather for influences large and soundly poised ; we are not subject to them but to other powers that can always enliven and relieve. It is health in us, I say, to be full of heartiness and of the joy of the world, and of whether we have such health our comfort in a great wind is a good test indeed. No man spends his day upon the mountains when the wind is out, riding against it or pushing forward on foot through the gale, but at the end of his day feels that he has had a great host about him. It is as though he had experienced armies. The days of high winds are days of innumerable sounds, innumerable in variation of tone and of intensity, playing upon and awakening innumerable powers in man. And the days of high wind are days in which a physical compulsion has been about us and we have met pressure and blows, resisted and turned them ; it enlivens us with the simulacrum of war by which nations live, and in the just pursuit

of which men in companionship are at their noblest.

It is pretended sometimes (less often perhaps now than a dozen years ago) that certain ancient pursuits congenial to man will be lost to him under his new necessities ; thus mer. sometimes talk foolishly of horses being no longer ridden, houses no longer built of wholesome wood and stone, but of metal ; meat no more roasted, but only baked ; and even of stomachs grown too weak for wine. There is a fashion of saying these things, and much other nastiness. Such talk is (thank God !) mere folly ; for man will always at last tend to his end, which is happiness, and he will remember again to do all those things which serve that end. So it is with the uses of the wind, and especially the using of the wind with sails.

No man has known the wind by any of its names who has not sailed his own boat and felt life in the tiller. Then it is that a man has most to do with the wind, plays with it, coaxes or refuses it, is wary of it all along ; yields when he must yield, but comes up and pits himself again against its violence ; trains it, harnesses it, calls it if it fails him, denounces it if it will try to be too strong, and in every manner conceivable handles this glorious playmate.

As for those who say that men did but use the wind as an instrument for crossing the sea, and that sails were mere machines to them, either they have never sailed or they were quite unworthy of sailing. It is not an accident that the tall ships of every age of varying fashions so arrested human sight and seemed so splendid. The whole of man went into their creation, and they expressed him very well ; his cunning, and his mastery, and his adventurous heart. For the wind is in nothing more capitally our friend than in this, that it has been, since men were men, their ally in the seeking of the unknown and in their divine thirst for travel which, in its several aspects—pilgrimage, conquest, discovery, and, in general,

enlargement—is one prime way whereby man fills himself with being.

I love to think of those Norwegian men who set out eagerly before the north-east wind when it came down from their mountains in the month of March like a god of great stature to impel them to the west. They pushed their Long Keels out upon the rollers, grinding the shingle of the beach at the fjord-head. They ran down the calm narrows, they breasted and they met the open sea. Then for days and days they drove under this master of theirs and high friend, having the wind for a sort of captain, and looking always out to the sea line to find what they could find. It was the springtime; and men feel the spring upon the sea even more surely than they feel it upon the land. They were men whose eyes, pale with the foam, watched for a landfall, that unmistakable good sight which the wind brings us to, the cloud that does not change and that comes after the long emptiness of sea days like a vision after the sameness of our common lives. To them the land they so discovered was wholly new.

We have no cause to regret the youth of the world, if indeed the world were ever young. When we imagine in our cities that the wind no longer calls us to such things, it is only our reading that blinds us, and the picture of satiety which our reading breeds is wholly false. Any man to-day may go out and take his pleasure with the wind upon the high seas. He also will make his landfalls to-day, or in a thousand years; and the sight is always the same, and the appetite for such discoveries is wholly satisfied even though he be only sailing, as I have sailed, over seas that he has known from childhood, and come upon an island far away, mapped and well known, and visited for the hundredth time.

ON A WINGED HORSE AND THE EXILE WHO RODE HIM¹

IT so happened that one day I was riding my horse Monster in the Berkshire Hills right up above that White Horse which was dug they say by this man and by that man, but no one knows by whom ; for I was seeing England, a delightful pastime, but a somewhat anxious one if one is riding a horse. For if one is alone one can sleep where one chooses and walk at one's ease, and eat what God sends one and spend what one has ; but when one is responsible for any other being (especially a horse) there come in a thousand farradiddles, for of anything that walks on earth, man (not woman—I use the word in the restricted sense) is the freest and the most unhappy.

Well, then, I was riding my horse and exploring the island of England, going eastward of a summer afternoon, and I had so ridden along the ridge of the hills for some miles when I came, as chance would have it, upon a very extraordinary being.

He was a man like myself, but his horse, which was grazing by his side, and from time to time snorting in a proud manner, was quite unlike my own. This horse had all the strength of the horses of Normandy, all the lightness, grace, and subtlety of the horses of Barbary, all the conscious value of the horses that race for rich men, all the humour of old horses that have seen the world and will be disturbed by nothing,

¹ From *On Nothing*.

and all the valour of young horses who have their troubles before them, and race round in paddocks attempting to defeat the passing trains. I say all these things were in the horse, and expressed by various movements of his body, but the list of these qualities is but a hint of the way in which he bore himself; for it was quite clearly apparent as I came nearer and nearer that the horse before me was very different (as perhaps was the man) from the beings that inhabit this island.

While he was different in all qualities that I have mentioned—or rather in their combination—he also differed physically from most horses that we know, in this, that from his sides and clapt along them in repose was growing a pair of very fine sedate and noble wings. So habited, with such an expression and with such gestures of his limbs, he browsed upon the grass of Berkshire, which, if you except the grass of Sussex and the grass perhaps of Hampshire, is the sweetest grass in the world. I speak of the chalk grass; as for the grass of the valleys, I would not eat it in a salad, let alone give it to a beast.

The man who was the companion rather than the master of this charming animal sat upon a lump of turf singing gently to himself and looking over the plain of Central England, the plain of the Upper Thames, which men may see from these hills. He looked at it with a mixture of curiosity, of memory, and of desire which was very interesting but also a little pathetic to watch. And as he looked at it he went on crooning his little song until he saw me, when with great courtesy he ceased and asked me in the English language whether I did not desire companionship.

I answered him that certainly I did, though not more than was commonly the case with me, for I told him that I had had companionship in several towns and inns during the past few days, and that I had had but a few hours' bout of silence and of loneliness.

"Which period," I added, "is not more than

sufficient for a man of my years, though I confess that in early youth I should have found it intolerable."

When I had said this he nodded gravely, and I in my turn began to wonder of what age he might be, for his eyes and his whole manner were young, but there was a certain knowledge and gravity in his expression and in the posture of his body which in another might have betrayed middle age. He wore no hat, but a great quantity of his own hair, which was blown about by the light summer wind upon these heights. As he did not reply to me, I asked him a further question, and said :

"I see you are gazing upon the plain. Have you interests or memories in that view ? I ask you without compunction so delicate a question because it is as open to you to lie as it was to me when I lied to them only yesterday morning, a little beyond Wayland's Cave, telling them that I had come to make sure of the spot where St. George conquered the Dragon, though, in truth, I had come for no such purpose, and telling them that my name was so-and-so, whereas it was nothing of the kind."

He brightened up at this and said : " You are quite right in telling me that I am free to lie if I choose, and I would be very happy to lie to you if there were any purpose in so doing, but there is none. I gaze upon this plain with the memories that are common to all men when they gaze upon a landscape in which they have had a part in the years recently gone by. That is, the plain fills me with a sort of longing, and yet I cannot say that the plain has treated me unjustly. I have no complaint against it. God bless the plain ! " After thinking a few moments, he added : " I am fond of Wantage ; Wallingford has done me no harm ; Oxford gave me many companions ; I was not drowned at Dorchester beyond the Little Hills ; and the best of men gave me a true farewell in Faringdon yonder. Moreover, Cumnor is my friend. Nevertheless, I like to indulge in a sort of sadness when I look over this plain."

I then asked him whither he would go next.

He answered : " My horse flies, and I am therefore not bound to any particular track or goal, especially in these light airs of summer when all the heaven is open to me."

As he said this I looked at his mount and noticed that when he shook his skin, as horses will do in the hot weather to rid themselves of flies, he also passed a little tremor through his wings, which were large and goose-grey, and, spreading gently under that effort, seemed to give him coolness.

" You have," said I, " a remarkable horse."

At this word he brightened up as men do when something is spoken of that interests them nearly, and he answered : " Indeed, I have ! and I am very glad you like him. There is no such other horse to my knowledge in England, though I have heard that some still linger in Ireland and in France, and that a few foals of the breed have been dropped of late years in Italy, but I have not seen them."

" How did you come by this horse ? " said I ; " if it is not trespassing upon your courtesy to ask you so delicate a question."

" Not at all ; not at all," he answered. " This kind of horse runs wild upon the heaths of morning and can be caught only by Exiles : and I am one. . . . Moreover, if you had come three or four years later than you have I should have been able to give you an answer in rhyme, but I am sorry to say that a pestilent stricture of the imagination, or rather, of the positive faculty, so constrains me that I have not yet finished the poem I have been writing with regard to the discovery and service of this beast."

" I have a great sympathy with you," I answered, " I have been at the ballade of Val-ès-Dunes since the year 1897 and I have not yet completed it."

" Well, then," he said, " you will be patient with me when I tell you that I have but three verses com-

pleted." Whereupon without further invitation he sang in a loud and clear voice the following verse :

*" It's ten years ago to-day you turned me out of doors
To cut my feet on flinty lands and stumble down the shores
And I thought about the all in all. . . "*

" The ' all in all,' " I said, " is weak."

He was immensely pleased with this, and, standing up, seized me by the hand. " I know you now," he said, " for a man who does indeed write verse. I have done everything I could with those three syllables, and by the grace of heaven I shall get them right in time. Anyhow, they are the stop-gap of the moment, and with your leave I shall reserve them, for I do not wish to put words like ' tumty tum ' into the middle of my verse."

I bowed to him and he proceeded :

*" And I thought about the all in all, and more than I could tell ;
But I caught a horse to ride upon and rode him very well.
He had flame behind the eyes of him and wings upon his side—
And I ride ; and I ride ! "*

" Of how many verses do you intend this metrical composition to be ? " said I, with great interest.

" I have sketched out thirteen," said he firmly, " but I confess that the next ten are so embryonic in this year 1907 that I cannot sing them in public." He hesitated a moment, then added : " They have many fine single lines, but there is as yet no composition or unity about them." And as he recited the words " composition " and " unity " he waved his hand about like a man sketching a cartoon.

" Give me, then," said I, " at any rate the last two." For I had rapidly calculated how many would remain of his scheme.

He was indeed pleased to be so challenged, and continued to sing :

*"And once atop of Lambourne Down, towards the hill of Clere,
I saw the host of heaven in rank and Michael with his spear
And Turpin, out of Gascony, and Charlemagne the lord,
And Roland of the Marches with his hand upon his sword
For fear he should have need of it;—and forty more beside!
And I ride; and I ride!
For you that took the all in all . . ."*

"That again is weak," I murmured

"You are quite right," he said gravely, "I will rub it out." Then he went on:

*"For you that took the all in all, the things you left were three:
A loud Voice for singing, and keen Eyes to see,
And a spouting Well of Joy within that never yet was dried!
And I ride!"*

He sang this last in so fierce and so exultant a manner that I was impressed more than I cared to say, but not more than I cared to show. As for him, he cared little whether I was impressed or not; he was exalted and detached from the world.

There were no stirrups upon the beast. He vaulted upon it, and said as he did so:

"You have put me into the mood, and I must get away!"

And though the words were abrupt, he *did* speak them with such a grace that I will always remember them!

He then touched the flanks of his horse with his heels (on which there were no spurs) and at once, beating the air powerfully twice or thrice with its wings, it spurned the turf of Berkshire and made out southward and upward into the sunlit air, a pleasing and a glorious sight.

In a very little while they had dwindled to a point of light and were soon mixed with the sky. But I went on more lonely along the crest of the hills, very human, riding my horse Monster, a mortal horse—I had almost written a human horse. My mind was full of silence.

.

Some of those to whom I have related this adventure criticize it by the method of questions and of cross-examination proving that it could not have happened precisely where it did ; showing that I left the vale so late in the afternoon that I could not have found this man and his mount at the hour I say I did, and making all manner of comments upon the exact way in which the feathers (which they say are those of a bird) grew out of the hide of the horse, and so forth. There are no witnesses of the matter, and I go lonely, for many people will not believe, and those who do believe believe too much.

ON REST¹

THERE was a priest once who preached a sermon to the text of "Abba, Father." On that text one might preach anything, but the matter that he chose was "Rest." He was not yet in middle age, and those who heard him were not yet even young. They could not understand at all the moment of his ardent speech, and even the older men, seeing him to be but in the central part of life, wondered that he should speak so. His eyes were illuminated by the vision of something distant ; his heart was not ill at ease, but, as it were, fixedly expectant, and he preached from his little pulpit in that little chapel of the Downs, with rising and deeper powers of the voice, so that he shook the air ; yet all this energy was but the praise or the demand for the surcease of energy, and all this sound was but the demand for silence.

It is a thing, I say, incomprehensible to the young, but gradually comprehended as the years go droning by, that in all things (and in proportion to the intensity of the life of each) there comes* this appetite for dissolution and for repose : I do not mean that repose beyond which further effort is demanded, but something final and supreme.

This priest, a year or so after he had appealed with his sermon before that little country audience in the emptiness of the Downs, died. He had that which he desired, Rest. But what is it ? What is the nature of this thing ?

¹ *From On Everything.*

Note you how great soldiers, when their long campaigns are done, are indifferent to further wars, and look largely upon the nature of fighting men, their objects, their failures, their victories, their rallying, their momentary cheers. Not that they grow indifferent to that great trade which is the chief business of a State, the defence or the extension of the common weal ; but that after so much expense of all the senses our God gave them, a sort of charity and justice fills their minds. I have often remarked how men who had most lost and won, even in arms, would turn the leisured part of their lives to the study of the details of struggle, and seemed equally content to be describing the noble fortunes of an army, whether it were upon the crest of advancing victory, or in the agony of a surrender. This was because the writers had found Rest. And throughout the history of Letters—of Civilization, and of contemporary friends, one may say that in proportion to the largeness of their action is this largeness and security of vision at the end.

Now, note another thing : that, when we speak of an end, by that very word we mean two things. For first we mean the cessation of Form, and perhaps of Idea ; but also we mean a goal, or object, to which the Form and the Idea perpetually tended, without which they would have had neither meaning nor existence, and in which they were at last fulfilled. Aristotle could give no summing up but this to all his philosophy, that there was a nature, not only of all, but of each, and that the end determined what that nature might be ; which is also what we Christians mean when we say that God made the world ; and great Rabelais, when his great books were ending, could but conclude that all things tended to their end. Tennyson also, before he died, having written for so many years a poetry which one must be excused in believing considerable, felt, as how many have felt it, the thrumming of the ebb tide when the sea calls back the feudal allegiance of the rivers. I know it upon

Arun bar. The flood, when the sea heaves up and pours itself into the inland channels, bears itself creatively, and is like the manhood of a man—first tentative, then gathering itself for action, then sweeping suddenly at the charge. It carries with it the wind from the open horizon, it determines suddenly, it spurs, and sweeps, and is victorious; the current races; the harbour is immediately full.

But the ebb tide is of another kind. With a long, slow power, whose motive is at once downward steadily towards its authority and its obedience and desire, it pushes as with shoulders, home; and for many hours the stream goes darkly, swiftly, and steadily. It is intent, direct, and level. It is a thing for evenings, and it is under an evening when there is little wind, that you may best observe the symbol thus presented by material things. For everything in nature has in it something sacramental, teaching the soul of man; and nothing more possesses that high quality than the motion of a river when it meets the sea. The water at last hangs dully, the work is done; and those who have permitted the lesson to instruct their minds are aware of consummation.

Men living in cities have often wondered how it was that the men in the open who knew horses and the earth or ships and the salt water risk so much—and for what reward? It is an error in the very question they ask, rather than in the logical puzzle they approach, which falsifies their wonder. There is no reward. To die in battle, to break one's neck at a hedge, to sink or to be swamped are not rewards. But action demands an end; there is a fruit to things; and everything we do (here at least, and within the bonds of time) may not exceed the little limits of a nature which it neither made nor acquired for itself, but was granted.

Some say that old men fear death. It is the theme of the debased and the vulgar. It is not true. Those who have imperfectly served are ready enough; those who have served more perfectly are glad—as

though there stood before them a natural transition and a condition of their being.

So it says in a book "all good endings are but shining transitions." And, again, there is a sonnet which says :

We will not whisper : we have found the place
Of silence and the ancient halls of sleep
And that which breathes alone throughout the deep
The end and the beginning ; and the face
Between the level brows of whose blind eyes
Lie plenary contentment, full surcease
Of violence, and the ultimate great peace
Wherein we lose our human lullabies.

Look up and tell the immeasurable height
Between the vault of the world and your dear head ;
That's Death, my little sister, and the Night
That was our Mother beckons us to bed :
Where large oblivion in her house is laid
For us tired children now our games are played.

Indeed, one might quote the poets (who are the teachers of mankind) indefinitely in this regard. They are all agreed. What did Sleep and Death to the body of Sarpedon? They took it home. And every one who dies in all the Epics is better for the dying. Some complain of it afterwards I will admit ; but they are hard to please. Roland took it as the end of battle ; and there was a Scandinavian fellow caught on the north-east coast, I think, who in dying thanked God for all the joy he had had in his life—as you may have heard before. And St. Anthony of Assisi (not of Padua) said, "Welcome, little sister Death !" as was his way. And one who stands right up above most men who write or speak said it was the only port after the tide-streams and bar-handling of this journey.

So it is ; let us be off to the hills. The silence and the immensity that inhabit them are the simulacra of such things.

HISTORY

THE LAST DAYS OF MARIE ANTOINETTE¹

I

THOSE who were to destroy the new society of the French, to rescue or to avenge the Queen, were now once more at hand and now almost arrived.

Their way to Paris lay open but for two last perilous and endangered defences ; to the right the lines of Weissembourg, to the left Maubeuge.

There are two avenues of approach westward into the heart of Gaul and two only. The great marches of the French eastward, which are the recurrent flood-tides of European history, pour up by every channel, cross the Alps at every pass, utilize the narrow gate of Belfort, the narrower gate of the Rhone, the gorge of the Meuse, the Cerdagne, the Somport, Roncesvalles. But in the ebb, when the outer peoples of Europe attempt invasion, two large ways alone satisfy that necessity at once for concentration and for a wide front which is essential to any attack upon a people permanently warlike.² These two ways pass, the one

¹ From *Marie Antoinette*.

² These words "concentration" and "a wide front" may seem self-contradictory. I mean by concentration a massed invasion, if you are to succeed against a military people ; and by "a wide front" the necessity for attacking such a people in several places at once, if you are to succeed. For a force marching by a single narrow gate (such as is the valley of the Meuse) is in peril of destruction if its opponents are used to war.

between the Vosges and the Ardennes, the other between the Ardennes and the sea. By the first of these have come hosts from Attila's to those of 1870 ; by the second, hosts from the little war-band of Clovis to the Allies of 1815. Both avenues were involved in this balancing moment of '93 : the first, the passage by Lorraine, was still blocked by the defence of Mayence and the lines of Weissembourg¹ ; the second, the passage by the Low Countries, was all but won. Of the string of fortresses defending that passage, Maubeuge was now almost the last, would soon be the very last, to stand.

It was not upon Mayence and the lines of Weissembourg (though these to soldiers seemed of equal importance), it was upon the bare plains of the north that Paris strained its eyes in these perilous hot days—the long flat frontier of Hainault and of Flanders—and it is here that the reader must look for his background to the last agony of the Queen.

The line of defence, stretched like a chain across that long flat frontier, was breaking down, had almost disappeared. Point after point upon the line had gone ; it held now by one point remaining, and the ruin of that was imminent : the Republicans were attentive, in a fever for the final crash, when the last pin-point upon which the defence was stretched should give way and the weight of the invaders should pour unresisted upon Paris. When that march began there would be nothing for those who had challenged the world but " to cover their faces and to die."

Of what character is that north-eastern frontier of France and what in military terms was the nature of the blow which was about to fall ?

It is a frontier drawn irregularly due south-east for a hundred miles, from the sea to the difficult highlands of Ardennes and the waste Fagne Land. As it runs

¹ The lines of Weissembourg did not, of course, physically block the entry ; they lay on the flank of it : but until the army behind them could be dislodged it made impossible an advance by that way into Lorraine.

thus irregularly, it cuts arbitrarily through a belt of population which is one in creed, speech, and tradition : there is therefore no moral obstacle present to the crossing of it, and to this moral facility of passage is added the material facility that no evident gates or narrows constrain an invading army to particular entries. From the dead flat of the sea-coast the country rises slowly into little easy hills and slopes of some confusion, but not till that frontier reaches and abuts against the Ardennes does any obstacle mark it. It is traversed by a score of main roads suitable for a parallel advance, all excellent in surface and in bridges and other artifice ; it is thickly set with towns and villages to afford repose and supply. Lastly, it is the nearest point of attack to Paris. Once forced, ten days' rapid marching from that frontier brings the invader to the capital, and there is nothing between.

Such advantages—which, it is said, tempt unstable brains in Berlin to-day—have rendered this line, whenever some powerful enemy held its farther side, of supreme defensive importance to the French. Until the formation of the Belgian State it had been for centuries—from the battle of Bouvines at least—the front of national defence ; here the tradition of the seventeenth century and the genius of Vauban and his successors had established a network of strongholds, which formed the barrier now so nearly destroyed in this summer of '93.

These fortresses ran along that frontier closely interdependent, every one a support to its neighbours, forming a narrowing wedge of strongholds, from where Dunkirk upon the sea was supported by Gravelines to where the whole system came to a point in the last fortress and camp of Maubeuge, close up against the impassable Ardennes.

Maubeuge was the pivot of that door. Upon Maubeuge the last effort of the invaders would be made. The rolling up of the defending line of strongholds would proceed until Maubeuge alone should be left to

menace the advance of the invasion. Maubeuge once fallen, all the Revolution also fell.

So much has been written to explain the failure of the Allies and the ultimate triumph of France in that struggle, that this prime truth—the all-importance of Maubeuge—clear enough to the people of the time, has grown obscured.¹ The long debates of the Allies, the policy of the Cabinet in London, the diversion upon Dunkirk, all these and many other matters are given a weight far beyond their due in the military problem of '93. The road from the base of the Allies to their objective in Paris lay right through the quadrilateral of fortresses, Mons, Condé, Valenciennes, Maubeuge. Mons was theirs; Condé, Valenciennes and Maubeuge blocked their advance at its outset. A deflection to the left was rendered impossible by the Ardennes. A deflection to the right, possible enough, added, for every degree of such deflection, an added peril to the communication of the advance, laying the flank of the communications open to attack from whatever French garrison might have been left uncaptured. All these garrisons must be accounted for before Coburg could march on Paris. Mons, as I have said, was in Austrian hands and in Austrian territory; Condé, nay, Valenciennes, might fall successively to the invader; but so long as Maubeuge remained untaken the march upon Paris was blocked.

There were not wanting at that moment critics who demanded an immediate march on the capital, especially as the summer waxed, as the peril of the Queen increased, and as the immobility of the Allies gave time for the martial law of the Terror to do its work, and to raise its swarms of recruits from all the country-

¹ The great authority of Jomini laid the foundation of this misconception, one which the reader might (perhaps erroneously) find implied in Mr. Fortescue's admirable account of this campaign; but the truth is that it is impossible to accumulate detail—as a military historian is bound to do—especially where long cordons are opposed to each other without danger of losing sight of the vital points of the line.

sides : these critics were in error ; Coburg at the head of the Austrian army was right. Poor as was the quality of the French troops opposed to him, and anarchic as was their constantly changing command, to have left a place of refuge whither they could concentrate and whence they could operate in a body upon his lengthening communications, as he pressed on to Paris through hostile country, would have been mad cavalry work, not generalship. Maubeuge with its entrenched camp, Maubeuge open to continual reinforcement from all the French country that lay south and west of it, was essential to his final advance. That Maubeuge stood untaken transformed the war, and, in spite of every disturbing factor in the complex problem, it should be a fixed datum in history that the resistance of Maubeuge and the consequent charge at Wattignies decided '93 as surely as the German artillery at St. Privat decided 1870. Maubeuge was the hinge of all the campaign.

Coburg, as the summer heightened, set out to pocket one by one the supports of that last position : he easily succeeded.

In Paris a vague sense of doom filled all the leaders, but a fever of violent struggle as well. . . . The Queen in her prison saw once again (and shuddered at it) the dark face of Drouet and heard his threatening voice.

All France had risen. There was civil war in the west and in the north. A Norman woman had murdered Marat. Mayence was strictly held all round about with the men of Marseilles raging within ; and as for the Barrier of Fortresses to the north, Coburg now held them in the hollow of his hand.

A fortnight after the Dauphin had been taken from the Queen, the fortress of Condé fell ; it had fallen from lack of food. The Council of Maubeuge heard that news. Valenciennes would come next along the line—then, they ! They wrote to the Committee of

Public Safety a letter, which may still be read in the archives of the town, demanding provisions. None came.

It is difficult to conceive the welter of the time : distracted orders flying here and there along the hundred miles of cordon that stretched from Ardennes to the channel : orders contradictory, unbeyed, or, if obeyed, fatal. Commands shifted and reshifted ; civilians from the Parliament carrying the power of life and death and muddling half they did ; levies caught up at random, bewildered, surrendering, deserting ; recruits too numerous for the army to digest ; a lack of all things. No provisions entered Maubeuge.

July dragged on, and Maubeuge could hear down the west wind the ceaseless booming of the guns round Valenciennes. Upon 26th July, Dubay, the Representative on mission for the Parliament, sent to and established in Maubeuge, heard an unusual silence. As the day drew on a dread rose in him. The guns round Valenciennes no longer boomed. Only rare shots from this point and from that were heard : perhaps it was the weather deceived him. But all next day the same damnable silence hung over the west. On the 30th he wrote to the Parliament : " We hear no firing from Valenciennes—but we are confident they cannot have surrendered." They had surrendered.

So Valenciennes was gone ! . . . Condé was gone. . . . Maubeuge alone remained, with the little outpost of Le Quesnoy to delay a moment its necessary investment and sure doom.

The officer in command of Maubeuge awaited his orders. They came from Paris in two days. Their rhetoric was of a different kind from that in which Ministers who are gentlemen of breeding address the General Officers of their own society to-day. The Committee of Public Safety had written thus : " Valenciennes has fallen : you answer on your head for Maubeuge."

Far off in Germany, where that other second avenue of invasion was in dispute, the French in Mayence had surrendered.

So July ended, and immediately, upon the 1st of August, the defiant decree was thrown at Europe that the Queen herself should be tried. So closely did that decision mix with the military moment that it was almost a military thing, and at half-past two on the morning of the 2nd the order reached her: she in turn was to go down the way so many had begun to tread.

She showed no movement of the body or of the mind. Night had already brought her too many terrors. The two women were awakened. The decree of the Convention which ordered the transference of the Queen to the Conciergerie for her trial was read. She answered not a word, but dressed herself and made a little package of her clothes; she embraced her daughter gently, and bade her regard Madame Elizabeth as her second mother; then stood for a moment or two in the arms of that sister-in-law who answered her in whispers. She turned to go and did not look backward, but as she went out to get into the carriage which was to carry her across to the City, she struck her head violently against the low lintel of the door. They asked her if she was hurt, and she answered in the first and only words that she addressed to her captors that nothing more on earth could give her pain. The carriage travelled rapidly through the deserted streets of the night, the clattering of the mounted guard on either side of it. It was her one brief glimpse of the world between a prison and a prison.

As the Queen drove through the night, silent as it was, there reached her those noises of a City which never cease, and which to prisoners in transition (to our gagged prison victims to-day as they cross London from one Hell to another) are a sort of gaiety or at least a whiff of other men's living. These noises were the more alive and the more perpetual in this horrid August dark of '93 because a last agony was now risen

high upon the Revolution ; the news had been of defeats, of cities fallen, of Valenciennes itself surrendered : so that the next news might be the last. All night long men sat up in the wine-shops quarrelling on it ; even as her gaolers drove her by, she saw lights in dirty ground-floor windows and she heard from time to time snatches of marching songs. It was the invasion.

II

The Queen descended from her carriage. She was weak but erect. The close heat of the night and her sleeplessness and her fatigue had caused great beads of sweat to stand upon her forehead. Up river along the quays there had already showed, as she crossed the bridge on to the Island of the Cité, a faint glimmer of dawn, but here in the courtyard of the prison all was still thick night. The gates of the Conciergerie opened rapidly and shut behind her.

Her gaolers led the way down a long, low, and dark corridor, stifflingly close and warm, lit here and there with smoky candles. She heard the murmur of voices, and saw at the end of the passage a group of the police and of magistrates at the door of the little room that was to be her cell. She entered through the throng, saw the official papers signed at the miserable little table, and heard the formal delivery of her person to the authorities of the prison ; then they left her, and in their place came in a kindly woman, the wife of the porter, and with her a young girl, whose name she heard was Rosalie. The Queen sat down on the straw-bottomed chair and glanced round by the light of the candle beside her.

It was a little low room, quite bare : damp walls, the paper of which, stamped with the royal *fleur de lys*, hung mildewed, rose from a yet damper floor of brick set herringbone-wise ; a small camp-bed covered with the finest linen alone relieved it, and a screen, some four feet high, between her and the door afforded

some little shelter. Above her a small barred window gave upon the paving of the prison yard, for the cell was half underground. Here Custine—who had lost the North and was to be executed for the fall of Valenciennes—had been confined till his removal but a few hours before to make way for the Queen. Here is now the canteen of the prison.

It was very late. The new day was quite broad and full, showing the extreme paleness of her face and her weary eyes. She stood upon a little stuff-covered hassock, hung her watch upon a nail, and began to undress, to sleep if she might sleep for a few hours. A servant of the turnkey's, the girl called Rosalie, timidly offered her help: the Queen put her gently aside, saying: "Since I have no maid, I have learnt to do all myself." They blew their candles out and left her to repose.

On the fourth day, the 6th of August, they came again and took from her further things which a prisoner might not enjoy; among them that little watch of hers in gold. She gave it to them. It was the little watch which she had worn when she had come in as a child to Compiègne on her way to the great marriage and to the throne. It was the last of her ornaments.

A routine began and lasted unbroken almost till August ended. In that little low cell, more than half underground, dimly lit by the barred window that stood level with the flags outside, day succeeded day without insult, but without relief, and here at last her strait captivity began what the Temple hitherto could never do. Her spirit did not fail, but her body began to weaken, and in her attitude and gesture there had entered the appearance of despair. . . . Outside the Committee wondered whether their daring might not bear fruit, and whether, to save the Queen, the frontier might not be relieved. But no offer came from the Kings, and the hostage of the Republicans remained useless on their anxious hands. . . . In Brussels Fersen heard and went wild, talked folly of an immediate march on Paris, cursed Coburg and all

rules of war ; but Coburg was not to be moved—he knew his trade, and still prepared the sieges.

She had no privacy. All day long a corporal of police and his man sat on guard in a corner of the room. All night her door, in spite of its two great bolts, was guarded. For the rest her wants were served. She asked for a special water from the neighbourhood of what had been Versailles, and she obtained it. They hired books for her. They permitted her good food and the daily expense upon it of a very wealthy woman.¹ The porter's wife and the maid were very tender to her. They put flowers on her small oak table and they marketed at her desire. Her other service wounded her ; first an old woman who was useless, the turnkey's mother ; next a young virago, Havel by name, whose rudeness disturbed her. They would let her have no steel—not even the needles with which she was knitting for her little son, nor a knife to cut her food ; but more than all there sank into her the intolerable monotony, the fixed doubt, the utter isolation which made the place a tomb. The smallest incident moved her. She would watch her gaolers at their picquet and note the game, she would listen to distant music, she would greet with a dreadful reminiscence of her own the porter's little son, and cry over him a little and speak of the Dauphin—but this last scene was so vivid that at last they dared no longer bring the child. She kept for consolation all this while, hidden in her bosom, a little yellow glove of her boy's, and in it a miniature of him and a lock of his hair.

• • • • •
Meanwhile Maubeuge :—

On the day which had seen the Queen enter the Conciergerie the Commander of Maubeuge issued the first warning of danger. The aged, the women and the children were invited to leave the shelter of the fortress and betake themselves to the open country.

¹ What would come to a pound a day in our money, and at our scale of living—for the uncooked food alone.

That order was but partially obeyed—and still no provisions reached the town.

Now that strong Valenciennes had fallen, the Allies had their business so thoroughly in hand that some debate arose among them whether the main garrison of Maubeuge should be assailed at once or whether the little outlying posts should be picked up first: the large and the small were equally certain to capitulate: there was ample leisure to choose.

Coburg was for the main attack on Maubeuge—but he was not keen—the wretched little force at Cambrai would do to begin with—or even the handful in Le Quesnoy. It was simply a question of the order in which they should be plucked.

The young Duke of York, acting as he was bidden to act from Westminster, proposed to divert some forty thousand men to the capture of Dunkirk; for it must be remembered that all this war was a war of Conquest, that the frontier towns taken were to compensate the Allies after the Revolution had been destroyed, and that Dunkirk was historically a bastion of importance to England, and that all the advance was to end in the annexation of French land.

This march upon Dunkirk has been condemned by most historians because it failed: had it succeeded none could have praised it too highly. Politically it was just in conception (for it gave Britain some balancing advantage against the Austrians their allies), and as a military project it was neither rash nor ill-planned. The force left with Coburg was ample for his task, and nothing could be easier than for the Austrian army alone to reduce (as it did reduce) the worthless garrisons opposed to it, while the English commander was doing English work upon the right.¹

¹ Even as it was, and in spite of his failure before Dunkirk, the Duke of York had plenty of time to bring back his remnant and help Coburg after that failure, and to have joined him in front of Maubeuge before the French attempted the relief of that town. The English commander could easily have been present at Wattignies, and would probably or certainly have

The combined forces spent the close of the week after Valenciennes had fallen in driving off such of the French as were still in the open under Kilmain. A few days later forty-seven battalions, of whom a full seventh were English and Irish men, marched off under York for Dunkirk, while Coburg at his ease sat down before the little town of Le Quesnoy, the last fortified support of Maubeuge upon the west. Upon the same day he brushed the French out of the wood of Mormal, the last natural obstacle which could protect Maubeuge when Le Quesnoy should have fallen. It was the 17th of August—but already in Paris there had passed one of the chief accidents of History: an accident from which were to flow all the tactics of the Great War, ultimately the successes of Napoleon, and immediately the salvation of the Revolution: Lazare Carnot had been admitted to the Committee of Public Safety.

In Paris the Queen endured that August: and, isolated from the world, she did not know what chances of war might imperil her through the fury of a defeated nation or might save her by the failure of the Terror and its martial law.

As she thus waited alone and in silence the pressure upon the Republic grew. Lyons had risen when Marat died. Vendée was not defeated: before the month ended the English were in Toulon.

As the hot days followed each other in their awful sameness she still declined: her loss of blood never ceased, her vigour dwindled. A doctor of great position, the surgeon Souberbielle,¹ visited the cell

prevented that miracle. But no one foresaw the miracle. Coburg did not ask York to come till the 7th of October. York did not march till the 10th, and even then he thought he had the leisure to waste a week in covering forty miles!

¹ He was famous for his operations for the stone, sat upon the Jury that condemned the Queen, was summoned for his art to Westminster Hospital, wondered in old age why the Restoration would not give his European fame a salaried post: thought it might be a fear of his infirmities of age:

and denounced its dampness for a danger : nothing was done. She lived on, knowing nothing of the world beyond and above those dirty walls, but vaguely she hoped or imagined an exchange and to be reunited with her children—to survive this unreal time and to find herself abroad again with living men. No change or interruption touched the long watch of her soul until, when she had already passed three weeks and more in nothingness, that inspector of police who had already befriended her in the Temple, Michonis, entered ; and a certain companion, spare and wild-eyed, was with him. It was a Wednesday—the last Wednesday in August ; the month had yet three days to run.

These two men who so visited her were in league to help her, and fantastic fortune had put an official of the city at her disposal for escape.

The whole scene was rapid—she had barely time to understand the prodigious opportunity. She noticed in the hand of Michonis's companion a bunch of pinks—perhaps she half recognized his face (indeed, he had fought in defence of the palace), she failed to take the flowers and he let them fall behind the stove—and the while Michonis was covering all by some official question or other. It was not a minute's work and they were gone : but in the flowers, when, after her bewilderment, she sought them, she found a note. Its contents offered her safety. Michonis (it ran), trusted as an official, would produce an order to transfer her person to some other prison ; in the passage he would permit her to fly. The note asked for a reply.

She had no pen or pencil, but she found a plan for answering, for she took a pin and pricked out painfully

danced high and vigorously before the committee of medical patronage to prove, at ninety, his unimpaired vivacity, was refused any public salary, and died—some years later—a still active but disappointed man, “fearing that his politics had had some secret effect in prejudicing the royal family against him.”

these words on a slip of paper : "I am watched ; I neither write nor speak ; I count on you ; I will come." The policeman of her guard—not the corporal—had been bought. He took the pricked slip of paper from her and gave it to the porter's wife, her friend. Next day Michonis called for it, knew that the Queen was ready, laid all his plans, and on the Monday, by night, appeared at the door of the Conciergerie with his official order for the removal of the Queen.

But even in these few hours there had been time for treason. The policeman had revealed the message to the authorities. The faces Michonis saw at the gate of the prison by the sentry's lamp when he came up that Monday night were not those he expected or knew. His plot was already in the hands of the Government and he was lost.

Within, the Queen waited in an agony of silence for the sound of her deliverers ; the hours of the morning drew on and the summer dawn of the Tuesday broadened ; no steps had sounded on the stones of the passage ; everything had failed.

Her deliverer suffered. She herself was closely examined and transferred to another cell where she must wait under more rigid compulsion for the end.

No other human fortune ¹ came to Marie Antoinette from that day until, seven weeks later, she died.

West and a little north of Maubeuge, but twenty miles away, the watchers a month and more before had heard the ceaseless guns round Valenciennes. Then had come the silence of the surrender. Now they heard much nearer, west and a little to the south, the loud fury of a new and neighbouring bombardment as the shot poured into Le Quesnoy. Soon, as they knew, those guns would be trained on their own walls. Little Le Quesnoy was the last of the line but one, and they, in Maubeuge, the last of all. The

¹ I reject the story of her Communion.

Monday, the first Monday in September, the Tuesday, the Wednesday, the Thursday, the Friday, all that week the garrison of Maubeuge listened to the endless sound which never faltered by day or by night, and they still wondered how long it might endure : there were but 6000 in the little place and their doom was so certain that their endurance seemed quite vain. Sunday and the guns never paused or weakened ; the second Monday came and they still raged—but on the ninth day when the marvel seemed to have grown permanent, on the Tuesday (it was the day that the Queen was thrust into her second and more rigorous imprisonment) again—as with Valenciennes—the ominous silence came : Le Quesnoy was treating, and Maubeuge now made ready for its end.

The free troops to the south and east (two poor divisions) moved doubtfully towards the entrenched camp of the fortress—knowing well that they must in a few days be contained : there was no food : there were not even muskets for them all.

Around them by detachments the French forces were being eaten up. The little garrison of Cambrai had marched out to relieve its neighbour—6000 men, three-quarters of the infantry regulars, three squadrons, and a battery of guns. The Hungarians rode through that battery before it could unlimber, refused to accept surrender, broke the line and hacked and killed until a remnant got off at a run under the guns of Bouchain. Declaye, their general, survived : he was in Paris within forty-eight hours, tried within another forty-eight, and on the morrow beheaded.

For a fortnight these contemptuous successes on the fringe of Coburg's army continued, and the main force meanwhile was gathering supplies, calling in detachments, organizing train, and making all ready for the last and decisive blow that should shatter Maubeuge. In Maubeuge they hurriedly and confusedly prepared : such grain as they could gather from neighbouring farms were seized, many of "the useless and the suspect" were expelled, the able-bodied civilians were

set to dig, to entrench, and to complain, and over all this work was a man worthy of the place and the occasion, for, on a high morning, the 15th of September, but a day or two after the surrender of Le Quesnoy, there had galloped into Maubeuge a representative of the Parliament well chosen by the Terror to superintend such an issue: he rode straight in the long stirrups of the cavalry with harsh, eccentric, and powerful clean face; a young man, dark and short and square: it was Drouet.

The two divisions hung nervously, the one east, the other west of the fortress, making a show to dispute the passage of the river against forces three times their own in number and indefinitely their superiors in training and every quality of arms: on the 28th¹ of September, at dawn, Coburg crossed where he chose both above and below the town; of the French divisions one was swept, the other hunted, into the fortress—before noon the thing was done, and the French force—happy to have escaped with but a partial panic—was blocked and held. With the next day the strain began, for the Austrians drove the surrounding peasantry within the walls and in the same hour burnt the stores accumulated outside. On the third day the first of the horses within Maubeuge was killed for food.

Drouet, for all his high heart, doubted if the Republic could deliver them and knew the sudden extremity of the town. He imagined a bold thing. On the 2nd of October, the fourth day of the siege, he took a hundred dragons—men of his own old arm—and set out across the Austrian lines by night: he designed a long ride to the Meuse itself and the sending of immediate news to the Committee of the hunger of Maubeuge: he feared lest those civilians in Paris should imagine that a week, ten days, a fortnight were all one to the beleaguered town, and lest they should frame their plan of relief upon the false hope of a long

¹ Not, as Jomini says, the 29th.

siege. So he rode out—and the enemy heard the hoof-beats and caught him. They put that dark man in chains ; they caged him also and made him a show. In Brussels, Fersen, with a dreadful curiosity, went to peep at his face behind the iron bars : in Paris the woman whose chance of flight he had destroyed at Varennes sat and awaited her judges.

Three days passed in Maubeuge and all the meat, salted and fresh, was sequestered. The manuscripts in the monastery were torn up for cartridges : everything was needed. On the next day, the 6th of October, all hay and straw were commandeered. On the next, the 7th, a census of the food remaining showed, for over 30,000 adult men and all the women and children besides, barely 400 head, and of these more than three-quarters were small sheep in poor condition. Upon the 10th such little grain as the town contained was seized by the Commandant. The next day the whole population was upon half rations and the townsmen were struggling with the soldiery. Upon the morrow again, the 12th, counsel was taken of the desperate need to advise the Government that the place was all but gone, and it was designed that by night such as might volunteer should bear the news or perish in crossing the lines.

That evening, the evening of the 12th, after dark, Marie Antoinette was led out from her cell for that preliminary Interrogation which, in French procedure, precedes the public trial. They led her from her little cell, through the narrow passages, into a great empty hall. Two candles, the only lights in that echoing darkness, stood upon the table.

She was in a deep ignorance of her position and of Europe. The silence of the room corresponded to the silence within her : its darkness to the complete loneliness of her heart. She did not know what were the fortunes of the French army, what advance, if any, had been made by their enemies—whom she still

regarded as her rescuers. She knew nothing of the last desperate risk upon the frontier which the Republic ran ; she knew nothing of the steps by which she had been brought to this position, the demand in Parliament for her execution as the news from the front got worse and worse : the summoning of the Court : the formation of the Bench that was to try her. Least of all did she know that the extreme mad group whom Hébert led had gone to her little sickly son suggesting to him (probably believing what they suggested) nameless corruptions from her hand : to these they believed he had been witness, nay, himself a victim ; she did not know that to these horrors that group had caused the child's trembling signature to be affixed. . . . He had sat there swinging his legs in the air from the high chair in which they had placed him to question him : he had answered " Yes " to all they suggested . . . he was her little son ! She, imprisoned far off from him, knew nothing of that hellish moment. She was utterly deserted. She saw nothing but the dark empty room and the two pale candles that shone upon the faces of the men who were soon to try her : they marked in relief the aquiline face of the chief judge Herman. The other faces were in darkness.

Certain questions privately put to her were few and simple, a mere preliminary to the trial ; she answered them as simply in her own favour. Her dress was dark and poor. She sat between two policemen upon a bench in the vast black void of the unfurnished hall and answered, and, when she had answered, signed. She answered conventionally that she wished the country well, that she had never wished it ill ; she signed (as they told her to sign) under the title of the " widow of Capet." They named two barristers to defend her, Chauveau Lagarde and Tronçon Ducourdray, and she was led back to her cell and to her silence. Next day, the 13th, these lawyers were informed, and came to consult with her.

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Upon the 13th, by night, twelve dragoons volunteered to take news out of Maubeuge, a sergeant leading them. They swam the Sambre and got clean away. They rode all night ; they rode by morning into Philippeville and begged that three cannon shots might be fired, for that was the signal by which Maubeuge was to know that they had brought news of the hard straits of the city beyond the Austrian lines. They rode on without sleep to Givet, and there at last they heard that an army was on the march, straight for the relief of the siege.

Carnot had gathered that army, bringing in the scattered and broken detachments from the right and the left, concentrating them upon Avesnes, until at last he had there to his hand 45,000 men. Carnot was there in Avesnes, and we have records of the ragged army, some of them fresh from defeats, most of them worthless, pouring in. There were those who had one shoe, there were those who had none ; they were armed in varying fashion ; they were wholly under-gunned. The boys straggled, marched, or drooped in, the gayer of them roaring marching songs, but the greater part disconsolate. With such material, in one way or another, Carnot designed to conquer. Maubeuge had been upon half rations since the beginning of the week, it might ask for terms in any hour, and between him and it stretched the long high line of wood wherein Coburg lay entrenched impregably.

The nominal command of the hosts so gathered was in the hands of Jourdan, a travelling draper who had volunteered in the American War, whom the Committee of Public Safety had discovered, once more a draper, and to whom it had given first the army of the Ardennes, then this high post before Maubeuge. He was a man of simple round features and of easy mind ; he had but just been set at the head of the Army of the North : left to himself he would have lost it—and his head. But the true commander was not Jourdan,

it was Carnot. Carnot came to represent **only** the force of the Parliament of which he was a member and the force of the Committee of Public Safety of which he was the brain ; but once on the field he exceeded both these capacities and became, what he had always been, a soldier. His big and ugly, bulging forehead with its lean wisp of black hair hid the best brain and overhung the best eye for tactics of all those that preceded and prepared the final effect of Napoleon's armies.

The great Carnot in Avesnes that night stood like a wrestler erect and ready, his arms free, his hands unclenched, balancing to clutch the invader and to try the throw. He, with that inward vision of his, saw the whole plan of the struggle from south to north, and overlooked the territory of the French people as a mountain bird overlooks the plain. He knew the moment. He knew it not as a vague, intense, political fear, nor even as a thesis for the learned arms and for the staff, but as a visible and a real world : he saw the mountains and the rivers, the white threads of roads radiating from Paris to all the points of peril, of rebellion or of disaster ; he saw the armies in column upon them, the massed fronts, the guns. He saw the royal flag over Toulon and the English fleet in harbour there, he saw the Bush and the Marsh of Vendée still unconquered, he saw the resistance of Lyons (for he had no news of its surrender) ; above all he saw those two doors against which the invader leaned, which were now pushed so far ajar and which at any moment might burst open—the lines of Weissenbourg ; and here, right to his hand, the entrenchments that covered the last siege of the northern frontier. He saw reeling and nearly falling, the body of the Republic that was his religion, and he saw that all the future, death or life, lay in Maubeuge.

The Sunday night fell over Paris and over those long Flemish hills. The morrow was to see the beginning of two things : the trial of the Queen

and the opening of a battle which was to decide the fate of the French people.

III

Monday, the 14th of October :—

The fate of the Queen and of the Republic had each come to a final and critical issue when the light broke, dully in either place, over Paris and over the pastures of the frontier. There the army lay to arms in the valley, with Coburg entrenched upon the ridge above them, and beyond him the last famine of Maubeuge : from dawn the French lines could hear, half-a-day's march to the northward, the regular boom of the bombardment. But Carnot was now come.

In Paris, when it was broad day, the chief Court above the prison was prepared.

The populace had crammed the side galleries of the great room and were forming a further throng, standing in the space between the doors and the bar. The five Judges, Herman the chief, filed on to the Bench ; a little below them and on their right a jury of fifteen men were empanelled. It was on the courage, the conviction or the fanaticism of these that the result would turn.

They presented, as they sat there awaiting the prisoner, a little model of the violent egalitarian mood which had now for a year and more driven the military fury of the Republic. Among them would be seen the refined and somewhat degraded face of a noble who had sat in the earlier Parliaments and who had drifted as Orleans had drifted—but further than had Orleans. There also were the unmistakable eyes of precision which were those of an optician, a maker of instruments. There were, resting on the rail of the box, the firm hands of a great surgeon (Souberbielle). A few of the common people were mingled with these :

contractors also, prosperous men, and master-carpenters. There was a hatter there, and a barber, a man who had made violins, and another who painted pictures for the rich. Of such elements was the body comprised which had row to determine so much in the history of Europe. Above them a presiding figure, Herman the judge, with his dark aquiline face, controlled them all. They looked all of them towards the door that led from the cells below, where two warders came upward through it, leading between them the Queen.

She also as she entered saw new things. The silence and the darkness of her long imprisonment fell from her : the noise of the streets came in from the windows before her ; she heard the rumour and she saw the movement of the populace which—save for that brief midnight drive two months ago—had been quite cut off from her since last she had shrunk from the mob on the evening when she had heard the gate of the Temple bolted behind her carriage. After that hush which had been so dreadfully divided by evil upon evil, she came out suddenly into the sound of the city and into the general air. In that interval the names of months and of days, the mutual salutations of men, religion and the very habit of life had changed. In that interval also the nation had passed from the shock of arms to unimagined crimes, to a most unstable victory, to a vision of defeat and perhaps of annihilation. France was astrain upon the edge of a final deliverance or of a final and irretrievable disaster. Its last fortress was all but fallen, all its resources were called out, all its men were under arms, over the fate of the frontier hung a dreadful still silence. In the very crisis of this final doubt and terror the Queen stood arraigned.

The women lowered their knitting-needles and kept them still. The little knot of Commissioners sitting with Counsel for the State, the angry boys in the crowd who could remember wounds or the death of comrades, stretched forward to catch sight of her as she came up

the stairs between her guards : they were eager to note if there had been any change.

She had preserved her carriage, which all who knew her had regarded since her childhood as the chief expression of her soul. She still moved with solemnity and with that exaggerated but unflinching poise of the head which, in the surroundings of Versailles, had seemed to some so queenly, to others so affected, which here, in her last hours, seemed to all, as she still preserved it, so defiant. For the rest she was not the same. Her glance seemed dull and full of weariness ; the constant loss of blood which she had suffered during those many weeks spent below ground had paled her so that the artificial, painted red of her cheeks was awful in that grey morning and her still ample hair was ashen and touched with white, save where some traces of its old auburn could be perhaps distinguished.

She was in black. A little scarf of lace was laid with exactitude about her shoulders and her breast, and on her head she wore a great cap which a woman who loved her, the same who had served her in her cell, put on her as she went to her passion. The pure white of this ornament hung in great strings of lawn on either side, and round it and beneath it she had wound the crape of her widowhood. So dressed, and so standing at the bar, so watched in silence by so many eyes, she heard once more the new sound which yesterday she had first learned to hate : the hard and nasal voice of Herman. He asked her formally her name. She answered in a voice which was no longer strong, but which was still clear and well heard in that complete silence :

" Marie Antoinette of Austria, some thirty-eight years old, widow to Louis Capet the King of France."

To the second formal question on the place of her first arrest, that :

" It was in the place where the sittings of the National Assembly were held."

The clerk, a man of no great learning, wrote his

heading : "The 23rd day of the first month of the fourth year of Freedom," and when he had done this he noted her replies, and Herman's short questions also : his bidding to the jury that they must be firm, to the prisoner that she must be attentive.

Into the clerk's writing there crept, as there will into that of poor men, certain grievous errors of grammar which in an earlier (and a later) time would not have appeared in the record of the meanest Court trying a tramp for hunger ; but it was the Revolution and they were trying a Queen, so everything was strange ; and this clerk called himself Fabricius, which had a noble sound—but it was not his name.

This clerk read the list of witnesses and the indictment out loud.

When these formalities were over they brought a chair. The Queen sat down by leave of the Court and the trial began. She saw rising upon her right a new figure of a kind which she had not known in all her life up to the day when the door of the prison had shut her out from the noise and change of the world. It was a figure of the Terror, Fouquier Tinville. His eyes were steadfast, the skin of his face was brown, hard and strong ; he was a hired politician covered with the politician's outer mask of firmness. Within he was full of the politician's hesitation and nervous inconstancy. A genuine poverty and a politician's hunger for a salary had been satisfied by the post of Public Prosecutor. He earned that salary with zeal and with little discernment, and therefore, when the time came, he also was condemned to die. It was he now in this forenoon who opened against the Queen.

His voice was harsh and mechanical : his speech was long, dull and violent : rhetorical with that scenic and cardboard rhetoric which is the official commonplace of all tribunals. The Widow Capet was a Messalina ; she was a leech ; she was a Merovingian Tyrant ; she was a Medicis. She had held relations with the "Man called King" of Bohemia and

Hungary ; she had urged Capet on to all his crimes. She had sent millions to aid her family in their war against the French people. She had woven the horrid plot of the 10th of August, which nothing but incredible valour had defeated. She was the main enemy which the new and angry Freedom for which he spoke had had to meet and to conquer.

Apart from its wearisome declamation the accusation was true ; save that—through no fault of her own, poor woman !—she had not aided the foreign cause with gold, all the story was evident and publicly known. She sat as near this orator as is a nurse to a bedside. She heard him with her suffering and disdainful face quite fixed and unmoved, save at one point : the mention of her son.

Fouquier Tinville was sane : he saw the crass absurdity of Hébert's horrors, he barely touched upon them very hurriedly (and as the rapid and confused words escaped him, her lips twitched with pain), but even as he did so he knew he had given the defence a hold.

It is held on principle in French Courts that an impartial presentation of the truth cannot be obtained unless witnesses are heard in a chance sequence, not divided into friends and foes as with us, but each (such is the theory) telling what he believes to be the truth. Even in these political trials of the Terror (which were rather Courts-Martial or condemnations than trials) the rule was observed, and when Fouquier sat down the file of witnesses began.

The parade was futile. For plain political facts known to the whole world no list of witnesses were needed, nor could their evidence be of the least avail. Moreover, that evidence was lacking. The witnesses defiled one after the other, each vaguer than the last, to prove (and failing to prove) things that were commonplaces to all Europe. Long past midday the empty procession continued through the drowsy hours past one o'clock and two : remembering trifles of her conduct true and false. To every assertion as the

judge repeated it (true or false) she answered quietly by a denial : that denial was now false, now true.

Even if the Revolutionary Tribunal could have subpoenaed Mallet or the Emperor or Fersen, it would have meant little to the result. Her guilt, if it was guilt so to scheme against the nation, was certain : what yet remained in doubt was the political necessity of such a trial at such a moment, the limit of hardihood in her judges and the possible effect in a democracy of public sympathy at some critical phase of the pleadings : and much more potent than any of these three, because it included them all, was the news that might come at any moment from the frontier and from the hunger of Maubeuge—no news came.

Last of these witnesses Hébert, all neat and powdered, presented his documents and put forward his abominations, his fixed idea of incest. The public disgust might here have turned the trial. There was a stir all round : her friends began to hope. As for the officials, they could not stop Hébert's mouth, but Herman was careful to omit the customary repetition : he was hurrying on to the next witness when a jurymen of less wit than his fellows and filled with the enormous aberrations of hate, pressed the charge.

The Queen would not reply. She half rose from her chair and cried in a high voice : " I appeal to every mother here," and then sank back again.

The crowd in the galleries began to move and murmur, the women raised their voices against the angry orders of the ushers and of the Bench demanding silence. Away, dining beyond the Seine, Robespierre, hearing of it, broke a plate at table in his anger, and thought Hébert's lunacy had saved her. A further witness, though he spoke of the flight to Varennes, could hardly be heard, and spoke quite unheeded ; and when he had concluded, the Court abruptly rose in the midst of the commotion, hubbub and change.

The Queen was led to her cell, keeping as she left her place, in spite of her hopeless fatigue, the steady

step wherewith she had entered ; and as she passed she heard one woman in the press sneering at her pride.

It was three o'clock. The first act in that long agony had lasted, without food or breathing-time, for seven hours.

While the Republic thus held the old world prisoner in Paris and tortured it in the person of the Queen, out on the frontier in the water-meadows of Avesnes, the Republic lay in its chief peril from the old world free and armed. Coburg and every privilege held the crest of the hills invincibly, and Maubeuge was caught fast, unreachable beyond the entrenchments of that ridge.

Carnot, looking westward down the valley of the Helpe, saw the deep orchards laden with October, nourished by the small and very winding stream. He saw the last French frontier hamlets and their mills : St. Hilaire, Dompierre, Tenieres, dwindling away to where, far off in its broad trench, ran the Sambre.

Before him also in this valley, as he looked westward down it, he saw stretched for some ten miles the encampment of his army : bivouac after bivouac, one beyond the other along the lines, and smoke rising from them. Tall hedges, not yet bare, divided the floor of the valley and the village grounds : here also Cæsar had marched through against the Nervii : for this corner of Europe is a pack of battlefields. Malplaquet lay just before the army ; within a march, Fleurus ; within sound of cannon, Jemappes.

Up above them beyond that wood of Avesnes, the line of the heights along the sky, was the enemy. It had loomed so dark before the late, dull and rainy dawn, that they had seen the notches in that line which were the emplacement of guns. The early afternoon had shone upon the sides of the hills, and the French outposts had seen the outposts of the enemy busy in the little villages that mark the foot of the slopes : St. Vaast, Dourlers, Foursies. And all day long boomed to the north behind the hills the sullen guns

before Maubeuge. At any hour that dull repeated sound might cease, and it would mean that the last fortress had fallen.

All that day Carnot passed in silence. The troops, some last detachments of which had but just marched in, lay dully in such repose as soldiers can steal: a jumble of orts patchwork battalions, militia, regulars, loud volunteers, old stark gunners; they listened to the distant and regular thunder of the siege. In some stations the few horses were grooming: in others, fewer still, the rare guns were cleaned.

An hour before dusk the six generals were called to Carnot's tent, and here and there the bugles roused the troops called for reconnaissance. These few detachments crossed the woods, pierced gaps in the hedges¹ to prepare the advance of the morrow, noted and exchanged shots with the outposts of the evening, and at evening they retired. As they retired Carnot gave orders to the guns. Out of effective range, vague and careless of a target, they fired and proclaimed the presence of a relieving army to the besieged.

Maubeuge in that still evening, during a lull of the siege-pieces, heard those French guns, and Ferrant and the general officers with him counselled a sortie. Only Chancel stood out; but Chancel was in command of the camp of Maubeuge, and his authority was unassailable. He did not distinguish the French fire, he thought it Austrian; no instinct moved him. Therefore all the next day while the battle was engaged, the garrison of Maubeuge failed to move; and later, for this error, Chancel was tried and killed.²

When the guns had been thus fired, the reconnaissance ended. The troops fell back again through the wood of Avesnes and slept the last sleep before

¹ So on the same field had Cæsar been compelled to clear the hedgerows. So little does the French peasantry change in a thousand years, and so tenacious is each French province of its customs.

² And the other version is that Chancel was for moving but that Ferrant would not. Choose.

battle. In Paris during that same evening, the long trial of the Queen proceeded.

At five, just in that hour when Carnot was recalling his scouts and ordering that warning cannon, the Court gathered and the prisoner was recalled.

In her cell she had not been silent.

As a great actress in an interval between her hardest lines will refuse repose and will demand rather comment or praise, so had she filled this little respite of two hours with questions and with doubts professed. She had dwelt upon the forms of the trial, she had begged her counsel to reassure her. She had despised the evidence. She had said she feared but one witness—Manuel—and indeed all who could have spoken as eye-witnesses to a hundred notorious truths were now over the frontier or dead.

With her entry the trial was resumed and the file of witnesses continued. It was as monotonous and as vague as before. Even Manuel, whom she had feared, was vague, and the very servants of the prison (though they had been witnesses to conspiracy) were uncertain and rambling. And this fatuity of the witnesses who were so solemnly and so strictly examined did not proceed from the turmoil of the time alone, nor even from the certitude which all then had (and which history has now) upon the past action of the Queen in cherishing the hope of foreign domination and in procuring it: rather did it proceed from the fact that these dreadful days were filled not with a judicial but with a political action, and that the Court was met not to establish truths at once unprovable and glaring, but to see whether or no the Revolution could dare to condemn the prisoner. It was an act of War and a challenge to What lay entrenched up there before Maubeuge, training its guns on the last hope, the ragged army in the valley of Avesnes below.

If all the witnesses which history possesses to-day, if Moleville, Fersen, Mallet, could have been brought into that Court and have had the Truth dragged from

them, it would have affected the issue very little. One thing alone could effect that issue, the news of victory : and no news came. All reports from the frontier had ceased.

The lights in the Court were lit, smoky and few. The air, already foul from the large concourse, grew heavy even for the free : for the sickened prisoner it became intolerable as the night hours drew in—six dark interminable hours. She heard the succeeding witnesses distantly, more distantly. Her head was troubled and her injured eyesight failed her. It was very late. The droning of the night was in her ears. She vaguely knew at last that there was a movement around her and that the Court was rising. She asked faintly for water. Busne, the officer in guard of her, brought it to her and she drank. As he supported her with some respect down the short passage to her cell he heard her murmuring : “ I cannot see. . . . I cannot see. . . . I have come to the end. . . . ”

She lay down when her doors had received her, and just before midnight she fell asleep. She slept deeply and for the last time.

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Tuesday, October 15.

A little before dawn the French bugles upon the frontier roused the troops of Avesnes ; their calls ran down the line, they passed from the Diane to the Générale, the woods before them sent back echoes, and soon the army moved. Far off upon the left Fromentin, upon the far right Duquesnoy, began marching forwards and inwards, converging, but the main body in the centre took the high road, which, if they could force its passage, would lead them straight to Maubeuge.

The sun was still level over the glinting wet fields when Carnot came to the summit of the long swell whence could be perceived, over an intervening hollow, the village of Dourlers, and above it the level fringe of trees which held the Austrian cannon ; an impregnable crest upon whose security Coburg and

the Allies founded the certitude of victory. The guns began.

Among the batteries of the French (too few for their task) two batteries, one of sixteen-pounders, the other of twelve, were the gift of the city of Paris. By some accident these, though ill manned, silenced the Austrian fire at one critical and central point above the Dourlers itself and close to the high road. Whether the French aptitude for this arm had helped to train the volunteers of the city, or whether these had such a leaven of trained men as sufficed to turn the scale, or whether (as is more probable) some error or difficulty upon the opposing slope or some chance shot had put the invaders out of action, cannot be known. Carnot seized upon the moment and ordered the charge. As his columns advanced to carry Dourlers he sent word at full speed to either wing that each must time itself by the centre, and forbade an advance upon the left or right until the high road should be forced and the centre of the Austrian position pierced or confused.

As he stood there looking down from the height where the road bifurcates, all the battle was plain to him, but his sapper's eye for a plan watched the wings much more anxiously than they watched the centre before him. The stunted spire of Wattignies a long way off to the east, the clump that hid St. Remy to the west, marked strong bodies of the enemy, and, in the open plateau beyond, their numerous cavalry could crush either extremity of his line (which at either extremity was weak) should either be tempted forward before the centre had succeeded. The front was long—over five miles—he could not enforce sagacity nor even be certain of intelligence, and as he doubted and feared the action of his distant lieutenants, he saw the centre advancing beneath his eyes.

The Austrian cannon had abandoned the duel. The French line approached Dourlers, deployed, and began the ascent. A sudden and heavy fire of musketry from the hollow road and from the hedges

met the sixteen thousand as they charged ; they did not waver, they reached the garden walls, and closed until, to those watching from the hill, the attempt was confused and hidden by a rolling smoke and the clustered houses of the village. It was past mid-morning.

In Paris they had awakened the Queen, tardily. She wondered perhaps to see Busne not there. He had suffered arrest in the night ; he was detained to see if he could tell the Court or the Committee some secret gathered from his prisoner. It was under another guard that she left her cell.

It was nearly nine before the Court assembled in the dull light, and later before the futile drag of evidence was renewed.

Whether sleep had revived her, or whether some remnant of her old energy had returned to her for such an occasion, no further weakness was perceived in the Queen. She sat, as she had sat all the day before until her faintness had come upon her, very ill, pale, and restrained, but erect and ready for every reply. Moreover, in that morning the weary monotony of such hours was broken by an incident which illuminated, though it made more bitter, the last of her sad days ; for after D'Estaing, the Admiral, had been heard to no purpose, another noble, also a prisoner, was called ; and as she saw his face she remembered better times, when the struggle was keen and not hopeless, and when this bewildering Beast that called itself now "Freedom," now "The Nation," had been tamed by the class which still governed Europe outside and which in that day controlled her kingdom also. It was Latour du Pin, the soldier who had been responsible for the repression of the Mutiny at Nancy three years—three centuries—before.

He still lived. Against no man had '93 a better ground for hate, and indeed the time came when the Revolution sent him down also to meet his victims

under the earth, but so far his commanding head was firm upon his shoulders. He enjoyed, as did all the prisoners of that time, the full use of his wealth. He was clothed and fed in the manner of his rank. He entered, therefore, with pride and with that mixture of gaiety and courage upon which, since the wars of religion, all his kind had justly plumed themselves: and as he entered he bowed with an excessive ceremony to the Queen.

The Judge asked him the formal question: Whether he recognized the prisoner? He bowed again and answered: "Indeed I know this Lady very well"; and in a few moments of his examination he defended himself and her with a disdainful ease that brought Versailles vividly out of its tomb.

Revived or stung by such a memory, the Queen replied to question after question exactly and even with some power: upon her frivolities, her expenses, her Trianon—all the legends of debauch which were based upon that very real and very violent fugue of pleasure in which she had wasted her brilliant years. The close of that dialogue alone has a strict interest for history, when Herman came at last to the necklace. Trianon had been on his lips a dozen times, and as he spoke the word he remembered that other fatal thing:—

"Was it not in Trianon that you first came to know the woman La Motte?"

"I never saw her!"

"Was she not your victim in the affair of the necklace?"

"She could not be, for I had never known her!"

"You still deny it?"

"I have no plan to deny. It is the truth, and I shall always say the same."

It is a passage of great moment, for here indeed the prisoner said precisely what was true and precisely what all, even those who would befriend her, least

believed to be true. She would pretend a love for the French and a keen regard for their glory—even for the success of their armies. She would pretend to have obeyed the King and not to have led him ; to have desired nothing for her son, but only the welfare of the people. Trapped and abandoned, she thought every answer, however false, legitimate ; but in that one thing in which her very friends had doubted her, another spirit possessed her and her words were alive with truth.

After that episode no further movement followed. There was opened before the Court (as the law compelled) her little pocket and the trinkets taken from her on the day of her imprisonment : the poor relics of her affection—the lock of hair, the miniature—were laid before the Judges. They heard Simon, the cobbler, in whose house her son was lodged—perhaps she looked more curiously at his face than at others—but he had nothing to say. They heard the porter of the Temple and sundry others who had seen, or pretended to have seen, her orders for the payments of sundry thousands—but all that business was empty and all those hours were wasted : it was not upon such vanities that the mind of Paris and of the crowded Court was turned, but upon the line of Flemish hills a long way off and upon the young men climbing up against the guns.

Paris and the mob in the street outside that Court of Justice and the hundreds crammed within it strained to hear, not Valazé, nor Tiset, nor any other useless witness, but some first breath of victory that might lift off them the oppression of those days ; nay, some roaring news of defeat and of Coburg marching upon them : then at least, before their vision was scattered by the invader, they could tear this Austrian woman from her too lenient Judges for a full vengeance before they themselves and that which they had achieved should die. At the best or at the worst they panted for a clear knowledge of their fortune ; but on through the day and well

into the afternoon, when the Court rose for its brief interval, no hint or rumour even had come to Paris from before Maubeuge.

Carnot had come down the hill from the fork of the roads ; he, and Jourdan beside him, followed behind the assault, bringing the headquarters of that general plan some half-mile forward. So they knew that the village of Dourlers was held. It was noon before the place was secured, and now all depended upon the action of the extreme wings.

It was certain that the struggle for this central village would be desperate : all depended upon the extreme wings. If these (and both of them) could hold hard and neither advance too far up the slope nor suffer (either of them) a beating-in, then the work at Dourlers would be decisive. And indeed the village was won, lost, and won and lost again : all the hard work was there. The French carried it, they went beyond, they were almost upon the ridge above it. In the upland field below the crest of wood the Austrian cavalry under Nuffling struck them in flank, and they were disordered. They were back in the village of Dourlers, and the fight for it was from house to house and from window to window. Twice it was cleared, twice lost. The French carry to an immortal memory a lad of fourteen who slipped forward in those attacks, got in behind the lines of the Hungarian Grenadiers who held the market-place, and, in lanes beyond, drummed the charge to make his comrades think that some were already so far forward and thus to urge them on. Many years after in digging up that ground his little bones were found buried side-long with the bones of the tall Hungarian men, and he has now his statue beating the charge and looking out towards the frontier from the gateways of Avesnes.

I have said that the horns of that crescent, the extreme wings, were ordered to be cautious, and warned that their caution alone could save the fight ;

for if they went too far while Dourlers in the centre was still doubtful, that centre would certainly be thrown back by such a general as Coburg, who knew very well the breaking-point of a concave line. The fourth attack upon Dourlers was prepared and would have succeeded when Carnot heard that Fromentin, up on the far left, up on the extreme tip of the horn of that crescent, had carried his point of the ridge, and, having carried it, had had the folly to pursue; he had found himself upon the plateau above (an open plateau bare of trees and absolutely bare of cover) with his irregulars all boiling, and even his regulars imagining success. Weak in cavalry, commanding men untrained to any defensive, he found opposed to him the cavalry reserve of the enemy—a vast front of horse suddenly charging. That cavalry smashed him all to pieces. His regulars here and there formed squares, his irregulars tried to, they were sabred and galloped down. They lost but four guns (though four counted in so under-gunned an army), but, much worse, they lost their confidence altogether. They got bunched into the combs and hollows, the plateau was cleared. They in their turn were pursued, and it would have been a rout but for two accidents: the first accident was the presence of a fresh reserve of French cavalry, small indeed, but very well disciplined, strict and ready, certain Hussars who in a red flash (their uniform was red) charged on their little horses and for a moment stopped the flood of the enemy. The check so given saved the lives though not the position of the French left wing. It was beaten. It was caved in.

The second accident was the early close of an October day. The drizzling weather, the pall of clouds, curtained in an early night, and the left thus failing were not wholly destroyed: but their failure had ruined the value of the central charge upon Dourlers. The final attack upon that central village was countermanded; the Austrians did not indeed

pursue the retreat of the French centre from its walls and lanes, but the conception of the battle had failed.

In the Court-room, in Paris, during those hours, while the Judges raised the sitting, the Queen sat waiting for their return; they brought her soup which she drank; the evening darkened, the Judges reappeared, and the trial began anew.

The witnesses called upon that last evening, when the lights were lit and the long night had begun, were for the most part those who had come personally into the presence or into the service of the Queen. Michonis especially, who was rightly under arrest for attempting her rescue, appeared; Brunier appeared, the doctor who had attended to the children in the Temple. The farce went on. The night grew deeper, the witnesses succeeded each other. All that they had to say was true. Nothing they said could be proved. One put forward that she had written some note asking if the Swiss could be relied upon to shoot down the people. She had said and written one hundred of such things. Her counsel, who were mere lawyers, worried about the presentation of the document—meanwhile night hastened onwards, and behind their veil of October cloud the stars continually turned.

Upon the frontier the damp evening and the closed night had succeeded one the other, and all along the valley of the little river it was foggy and dark. The dead lay twisted where they had fallen during that unwrought fight, and a tent pitched just behind the lines held the staff and Carnot. He did not sleep. There was brought to him in those midnight hours a little note, galloped in from the far south; he read it and crumpled it away. It is said to have been the news that the lines of Weissembourg were forced—and so they were. The Prussians were free to pass those gates between the Ardennes

and the Vosges. Then Maubeuge was the last hold remaining : the very last of all.

Jourdan proposed, in that decisive Council of a few moments, held under that tent by lantern light in the foggy darkness while the day of their defeat was turning into the morrow, some plan for reinforcing the defeated left and the playing of some stalemate of check and countercheck against the enemy ; but Carnot was big with new things. He conceived an adventure possible only from his knowledge of what he commanded ; he dismissed the mere written traditions of war which Jourdan quoted, because he knew that now—and within twelve hours—all must certainly be lost or won. He took counsel with his own great soul, and called, from his knowledge of the French, upon the savagery and the laughter of the French service. He knew what abominable pain his scheme must determine. He knew by what wrench of discipline or rather of cruelty the thing must be done, but more profoundly did he know the temper of young French people under arms to whom the brutality of superiors is native and who meet it by some miraculous reserve of energy and of rebellious smiles.

Those young French people, many half-mutinous, most of them ill-clothed, so many wounded, so many more palsied by the approach of death—all drenched under the October drizzle, all by this time weary of any struggle whatsoever, were roused in that night before their sleep was deep upon them.

Carnot had determined to choose 7000, to forbid them rest, to march them right along his positions and add them to the 8000 on his right extreme wing, and then at morning, if men so treated could still charge, to charge with such overwhelming and unexpected forces on the right, where no such effort was imagined, and so turn the Austrian line.

There were no bugle-calls, no loud voice was permitted ; but all the way down the line for five miles

orders were given by patrols whose men had not slept for thirty hours. They roused the volunteers and the cursing regulars from the first beginnings of their sleep ; they broke into the paltry comfort of chance bivouac fires ; they routed men out of the straw in barns and stables ; they kicked up the half-dead, half-sleeping boys who lay in the wet grass marshes of the Tarsy ; and during all that night, by the strength which only this service has found it possible to conceive (I mean a mixture of the degrading and the exalted, of servitude and of vision), from the centre and from the left—from the forces which had been shot down before Dourlers and from the men who had fled before the Austrian cavalry when Fromentin had failed—a corps was gathered together under the thick night, drawn up in column and bidden march through the darkness by the lane that led towards the right of the position. With what deep-rooted hatred of commandment simmering in them those fellows went after thirty hours of useless struggle to yet another unknown blind attempt, not historians but only men who have suffered such orders know. They were 7000 ; the thick night, I say, was upon them ; the mist lay heavy all over the wet land ; and as they went through the brushwood and chance trees that separated the centre from the right of the French position, they heard the drip of water from the dead, hanging leaves. Their agony seemed to them quite wanton and purposeless. They were halted at last mechanically like sheep at various points under various sleeping farms in various deserted, tiny, lightless villages. The night was far spent ; they could but squat despairing, each squadron at its halting-place waiting for the dawn and for new shambles. Meanwhile it was thick night.

It was nearing midnight in Paris, but none yet felt fatigue, neither the Judges nor their prisoner ; nor did any in the straining audience that watched the slow determination of this business suffer the approach

of sleep. The list of the witnesses was done and their tale was ended.

Herman leant forward, hawk-faced, and asked the Queen in the level judicial manner if she had anything to add to her defence before her advocates should plead. She answered complaining of the little time that had been afforded her to defend—and the last words she spoke to her Judges were still a vain repetition that she had acted only as the wife of the King and that she had but obeyed his will.

The Bench declared the examination of the witnesses closed. For something like an hour that bronzed and hollow-faced man next by her, Fouquier Tinville, put forward the case for the Government; he was careful to avoid the mad evidence Hébert had supplied. When he sat down, the Defence spoke last—as has since Rome been the custom or rather the obvious justice of French procedure; so that the last words a Jury may hear shall be words for the prisoner at the bar—but this was not a trial, though all the forms of trial were observed. Chauveau Lagarde spoke first, his colleague next. When they had ceased they were arrested and forbidden to leave the building, lest certain words the Queen had whispered should mean some communication with the invader.

The summing up (for summing up was still permitted, and a century of Revolutionary effort was to pass before the pressure of the Bench upon the Jury should be gradually destroyed) was what the angers of that night expected and received. It was three o'clock in the morning before the four questions were put to the Jury. Four questions drawn indeed from the Indictment but avoiding its least proved or least provable clauses. Had there been relations between the Executive and the foreign enemies of the State, and promises of aid to facilitate the advance of their armies? If so, was Marie Antoinette of Austria proved to have been privy to that plan?

The Jury left the hall. A murmur of tongues

loosened rose all around. The prisoner was led out beyond the doors of the chamber. For one long unexpected hour she was so detained while the Jury were still absent ; then a signal was given to her guards and they led her in.

The cold violence of formal law still dominated the lawyers. Herman put forth the common exhortation of judges against applause or blame. He read to her the conclusions of the Jury : they were affirmative upon every point of the four. He asked her with that same cold violence of formality, after the Public Prosecutor had demanded the penalty of death set down for such actions as hers in the new Penal Code, whether she had anything to say against her sentence. She shook her head.

She was at the end of human things. She stood and saw the Judges upon the Bench conferring for a moment, she stood to hear her sentence read to her, and as she heard it she watched them in their strange new head-dress all plumes, and she fingered upon the rail before her with the gestures ladies learn in fingering the keys : she swept her fingers gently as though over the keys of an instrument, and soon the reading of the sentence was done and they led her away. It was past four o'clock in the morning.

On the terrace of his castle in Germany that night George of Hesse saw the White Lady pass, the Ghost without a face that is the warning of the Hapsburgs, and the hair of his head stood up.

The long dark hours of the morning still held the troops that had marched over from the left to the right of the French position before Maubeuge. The first arrivals had some moments in which to fall at full length on the damp earth in the extremity of their fatigue, but all the while the later contingents came marching in until, before it was yet day but when already the farms about knew that it was morning, and when the cocks had begun to crow in the steadings, all rose and stood to arms. The mist was

deepening upon them, a complete silence interpenetrated the damp veil of it, nor through such weather were any lights perceptible upon the heights above which marked the end of the Austrian line.

The Queen went down the stone steps of the passage: she entered regally into the cell made ready. She called without interval for pen and paper, and she sat down to write. She felt, after the transition from the populous Court to the silence of those walls, an energy that was not natural and that could not endure, but that served her for an inspiration. She had tasted but a bowl of soup since the morning—nay, since the evening before, thirty hours—soon she must fail. Therefore she wrote quickly while her mood was still upon her.

She sat and wrote to her dead husband's sister the letter which, alone of all her acts, lends something permanently noble to her name. It is a run of words exalted, dignified, and yet tremendous, nor does any quality about that fourfold sheet of writing, yellow with years, more astound the reader than the quality of revelation: for here something strong and level in her soul, something hitherto quite undiscovered, the deepest part of all, stands and shines. The sheet is blurred—perhaps with tears: we do not know whether ever it was signed or ended; but before the morning came she laid herself upon her bed in her poor black dress, her head was raised somewhat upon her right hand, and so lying she began very bitterly to weep.

The priest of St. Landry, the parish church of the prison, entered to minister to her: she spoke just such few words to him as might assure her that he had sworn the civic oath and was not in communion. When she knew this she would not hear him. But he heard her murmuring against the bitter cold, and bade her put a pillow upon her feet. She did so and was again silent.

The hours wore on, the scent of newly lighted fires came from the prison yard and the noise of men

awakening. The dripping of the damp weather sounded less in the increase of movement, and on the pavement of the quays without began the tramp of marching and the chink of arms ; from further off came the rumble of the drum : 30,000 were assembling to line her Way. The two candles showed paler in the wretched room. It was dawn.

The 16th of October broke upon the Flemish hills : the men who had endured that night-march along the front of the battlefield, the men who had received them among the positions of the extreme right, still drooped under the growing light and were invigorated by no sun. The mist of the evening and of the night from dripping and thin had grown dense and whitened with the morning, so that to every soldier a new despair and a new bewilderment were added from the very air, and the blind fog seemed to make yet more obscure the obscure designs of their commanders. The day of their unnatural vigil had dawned, and yet there came no orders nor any stirring of men. Before them slow schistous slopes went upwards and disappeared into the impenetrable weather which hid clogged ploughland and drenched brushwood of the rounded hill ; hollow lanes led up through such a land to the summit of the little rise and the hamlet of WATTIGNIES ; this most humble and least of villages was waiting its turn for glory.

The downward slope which formed the eastern end of the Austrian line, the low rounded slope whose apex was the spire of the village, was but slightly defended, for it was but the extreme of a position, and who could imagine then—or who *now*—that march through the sleepless night, or that men so worn should yet be ready for new action with the morning ? No reinforcement, Coburg knew, could come from behind that army : and how should he dream that Carnot had found the power to feed the fortunes of the French from their own vitals and to drag these shambling 7000, wrenched from west to east during

the darkness : or how, if such a thing had been done, could any man believe that, such a torture suffered, the 7000 could still charge ?

Yet, had Coburg known the desperate attempt he would have met it, he would have covered that ultimate flank of his long ridge and reinforced it from his large reserve. But the deep mist and the dead silence harshly enforced during the night-march had hidden all the game, and in front of Wattignies, holding that round of sloping fields and the low semicircular end of the ridge before the village, there were but 3000 ; the infantry of Klebek, of Hohenlohe, and of Stern ; for their cavalry they had behind them and alongside of the village farms a few dragoons ; certain Croatian battalions stood in a second line. These in that morning, expecting nothing but perhaps the few troops as they had met easily the day before, waited under the mist in formation and heard no sound. The morning broadened ; the white vapour seemed lighter all around, but no voices could be heard, nor did there come up through its curtain any rumble of limber from the roads below.

As the Queen so lay disconsolate and weeping bitterly, stretched in her black gown upon the wretched bed and supporting her head upon her hand, there came in the humble girl who had served her faithfully and who was now almost distraught for what was to come. This child said :

" You have not eaten all these hours. . . . What will you take now that it is morning ? "

The Queen answered, still crying : " My child, I need nothing more : all is over now."

But the girl added : " Madam, I have kept warm upon the hob some soup and vermicelli. Let me bring it you." The Queen, weeping yet more, assented.

She sat up a moment (but feebly—her mortal fatigue had come upon her—her loss of blood increased and was continued), she took one spoonful and

another ; soon she laid the nourishment aside, and the morning drew on to her death.

She must change for her last exit. So much did the Revolution fear to be cheated of its defiance to the Kings that the warders had orders not to lose sight of her for one moment : but she would change. She would go in white to her end.

The girl who had served her screened her a little, and in the space between the bed and the wall she crouched and put on fresh linen, and in place of her faded black a loose white muslin gown. Her widow's head-dress also, in which she had stood proudly before her Judges, she stripped of its weeds, and kept her hair covered by no more than the linen cap.

Her Judges came in and read to her her sentence.

The executioner, awkward and tall, came in. He must bind her hands. "Why must you bind my hands? The King's hands were not bound." Yet were her hands bound and the end of the rope left loose that her gaoler might hold it : but she perhaps herself, before they bound her, cut off the poor locks of her hair.

They led her out past the door of the prison : she was "delivered" and signed for ; on the steps before the archway she went up into the cart, hearing the crowd howling beyond the great iron gates of the Law Courts, and seeing seated beside her that forsworn priest to whom she would not turn. . . . Nor were these the last humiliations : but I will not write them here.

Up and down the passages of the prison a little dog whom she had cherished in her loneliness ran whining and disconsolate.

The cart went lumbering on, past the quay, over the bridge under the murky drizzle. The windows beyond the river were full of heads and faces ; the edges of the quays were black with the crowd. The river Seine ran swollen with the rains ; its tide and rolling made in such weather no mark upon the water-walls of stone. The cart went lumbering on over the rough

wet paving of the northern bank. It turned into the Rue St. Honoré, where the narrow depth was full of noise. The long line of troops stood erect and close upon either side. The dense crowd still roared behind them : their prey sat upon the plank, diminished, as erect as the constraint of her bonds and her failing strength would allow. Her lips, for all their droop of agony, were still proud ; her vesture was new ; her delicate high shoes had been chosen with care for that journey—but her face might have satisfied them all. The painted red upon her cheeks was dreadful against her utter paleness : from beneath the linen of her cap a few whitened wisps of hair hung dank upon her hollowed temples : a Victim. Her eyes were sunken, and of these one dully watched her foes, one had lost its function in the damp half-darkness of the cells it turned blank and blind upon the rabble that still followed the walking jolt of the two cart-horses and the broad wheels. At the head of those so following, an actor-fellow pranced upon a horse, thrusting at her by way of index a sword, and shouting to the people that they held the tigress here, the Austrian. In the midst of those so following, an American eager to see elbowed his way and would not lose his vantage. From the windows of the narrow gulf a continued noise of wonder, of jeers, and of imprecations reached her. She still sat motionless and without speech : the executioner standing behind her holding the loose end of the cord, the forsworn priest sitting on the plank beside her but hearing no words of hers.

It is said that as the tumbril passed certain masts whence limp tricolour pendants hung she glanced at them and murmured a word ; it is to be believed that, a few yards further, at the turn into the Rue Royale, she gave way at the new sight of the Machine set up for her before the palace gardens.

This is known, that she went up the steps of the scaffold at liberty and stood for a bare moment seen by the great gathering in the square, a figure against the trees of what had been her gardens and the place

where her child had played. It was but a moment, she was bound and thrown, and the steel fell.

On the low mud and slope of Wattignies the mist began to wreath and thin as the hours approached high noon. Through gaps of it the three Austrian regiments could see trees now and then in the mid-distance, showing huge, and in a moment covered again by new whorls of vapour. But still there was no sound. In front of them towards Dimont, to their left round the corner of the slope in the valley of Glarges, with every lift of vapour the landscape became apparent, when suddenly, as the mist finally lifted, the wide plain showed below them rolling southwards, a vast space of wind and air, and at the same moment they heard first bugles, then the shouts of command, and lastly the rising of the Marseillaise : Gaul was upon them.

The sleepless men had been launched at last, the hollow lanes were full of them swarming upwards : the fields were ribbed with their open lines, and as they charged they sang.

Immortal song ! The pen has no power over colour or over music, but though I cannot paint their lively fury or make heard their notes of triumph, yet I have heard them singing : I know the place, and I have seen their faces as they cleared the last hedges of the rise and struck the 3000 upon every side.

These stood, wavered, fell back to re-form : then they saw new masses of the Republicans roaring up from Glarges behind their flank, broke and were scattered by the storm. The few heavy guns of the Austrians there emplaced were trained too late to check the onrush. The little pieces of the climbing and the surging men were dragged by laniards, unmasked behind gaps in the hurrying advance, crashed grape and were covered again for a moment by the living cover of the charge. The green at the hilltop was held, the poor yards and byres of Wattignies were

scoured and thundered through, and Carnot, his hat upon his sword, and Duquesnoy, his face half blood, and all the host gloried to find before them in their halting mid-day sweat when the great thrust was over, the level fields of the summit, the Austrian line turned, and an open way between them and Maubeuge.

Two charges disputed their certain victory. First the Hungarian cavalry galloped and swerved and broke against the dense and ever denser bodies that still swarmed up three ways at once and converged upon the crested edge of the upland plain ; then the Royal Bourbon, emigrants, nobles, swept upon the French, heads down, ready to spend themselves largely into death. They streamed with the huge white flag of the old Monarchy above them, and on it the faint silver lilies, and from either rank the cries that were shouted in defiance were of the same tongue which since Christendom began has so perpetually been heard along all the battle fronts of Christendom.

These also failed : a symbol in name and in flag and in valour of that great, once good, and very ancient thing which God now disapproved.

The strong line of Coburg was turned. It was turned and must roll back upon itself. Its strict discipline preserved it, as did the loose order of the Republican advance and the maddened fatigue of the young men who had just conquered : for these could work a miracle but not yet achieve a plan. The enemy fell back in order, sombre, massed and regular, unharassed, towards the Sambre. The straggling French soldiery, wondering that the fighting had ceased (but wisely judged incapable of pursuit), possessed the main road unhindered ; next day they drank with their comrades in Maubeuge.

In this way was accomplished what a principal critic of the art of war¹ has called " The chief feat of arms of the Republic."

¹ Napoleon Buonaparte.

It was somewhat past noon.

Upon that scaffold before the gardens which had been the gardens of her home and in which her child had played, the Executioner showed at deliberation and great length, this way and that on every side, the Queen's head to the people.

MR. BARR'S ANNOYANCE¹

October 16, 1793

[Marie Antoinette, formerly Queen of France, was executed just after midday on October 16, 1793. Negotiations for the import of American grain into France (then suffering from war and famine) were being conducted by the Revolutionary Government. An American agent is here supposed suffering an adventure on that day.]

MR. BARR of Philadelphia had risen at six o'clock in his room of the Hotel of the Golden Fleece, in the Rue Richelieu, upon October 16, 1793. He was ignorant of the French language, but this ignorance did not disturb his even and somewhat taciturn though genial mind. He had come to Paris upon business which he knew would be lucrative, and which he hoped he might conduct without too great a strain upon that code of morality which he held in common with Penn, the founder of his commonwealth. His clothes were neat, orderly, and rich, but not expensive in colour; they were of a puce, nearly black it was so dark, and were of one hue in every part of his garments. His shoes, which were buckled with silver plate, his cane, which had a fine golden top or knob, the heavy bunch of seals at his fob, and the iace which showed at his stock proved him to be a man of means; but his wig, though it was carefully tied, was undoubtedly provincial. His round and rubicund face was not ungenerous; but he was stout,

¹ From *The Eye-Witness*. (Eveleigh Nash.)

and perhaps fifty years of age. I should add that he was unmarried, although his wife (if he had had one) would take no part in his present adventure, yet it enables one to see him more clearly when one knows that he was a bachelor.

There were many things which Mr. Barr disliked in the Gaul. He had landed but three days before, but he already disliked the French villages, he disliked the shrill French voices, and though he had come into Paris too late in the evening to see anything but a few dingy oil-lamps swinging above wet and deserted streets, he was sure he would be out of mood with the city; but he bore his disappointment with the tenacity of the Republican he was, and fixed his mind as steadily as might be upon the thought of his appointment which was at noon with a clerk of the Government in the Garde Meuble. He was as good as promised an order for the shipment of grain, and every time he thought of it his quiet and well-composed mind became slightly but perceptibly gayer.

Mr. Barr threw open the windows. He detested the French stuffiness, the French alcove beds, and the heavy French curtains. He looked out into what he would have called, with no great originality, "God's fresh air." It was already light, and from this casement, which looked eastward, Mr. Barr could see a confused mass of roofs over the empty expanse of the Palais Royal. Upon these was falling a steady and disheartening drizzle from an undeterminate dull sky. Mr. Barr heard with curiosity the cries of the street vendors below, he looked with not a little dread down the great height which lay between his window-bar and the ground. He determined that he would spend the time between breakfast and noon in perambulating this famous city, and hoped he should have time to discover one or two of the spots he had seen mentioned in his news-sheet at home as being connected with the Reformation, the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, or the successful voyage of the great Franklin.

When, therefore, Mr. Barr had eaten a very large

beefsteak (procured for him with difficulty and cooked with a still greater difficulty at such an hour), he went out into the narrow street and turned southward a little vaguely to see what he might see.

There was not much doing in Paris on that morning ; the drizzle seemed to keep many people indoors, and even as he went through the labyrinth of little streets which occupied the courtyard of the Louvre he had but little sightseeing for his pains. He did, indeed, stop a moment to look curiously at a sentry in a tattered uniform with a greasy red cap upon his head and a sheepish look in his eye, but as he saw that the sentry resented so close an inspection Mr. Barr very politely continued his slow perambulation.

He crossed the river, spent quite half an hour watching the workmen upon the new bridge beyond the Tuileries Gardens, sauntered, more than ever unoccupied, through the lanes of the University, was annoyed to be jeered at by a group of little boys, recrossed the river, visiting the spot where Henry IV. had been stabbed, and then, finding by his fat watch that it was over half-past ten, he thought it high time to turn westward and get him by the Rue St. Honoré toward the Garde Meuble, for among Mr. Barr's dislikes was all hurry, confusion and noise. It was therefore unfortunate that as he came down a narrow street that debouched near the disused Oratorian Church (where he had intended to spend a few moments of pious reflection before the House of Coligny) he heard a rising from the Rue St. Honoré before him an offensive clamour, more unpleasant in his estimation than any of the other unpleasant things he had come across among these very disappointing people—to whom, however, he was forced to admit he owed much of his glorious independence from the British Crown. Much at the same moment that this noise offended him he heard in his rear a sharp rush of feet, and was swept down towards the Rue St. Honoré by a new contingent of the mob which

was pouring from everywhere into that thoroughfare like rivulets feeding a torrent in spate.

Mr. Barr was too stout and too courageous a man to be swept off his feet. He resisted a little angrily ; his resistance caused one of the mob to let drive at him with his fist, but the blow falling short no further harm was done him, and, indeed, the preoccupation of the crowd was too great to allow for a quarrel. As they ran and dragged him along with them they often went tiptoe, craning their necks and giving excited cries which Mr. Barr completely failed to understand.

So surrounded and so driven, Mr. Barr found himself at last wedged tight into a mass of men and women, who packed the Rue St. Honoré so that one could move forward but at a crawling pace, and from the mass so wedged and so slowly proceeding went forth a ceaseless roar, the like of which Mr. Barr had never heard save once in a September gale upon his recent voyage across the Atlantic Ocean.

At the head of the great mob, and so close to Mr. Barr that he could almost have touched them, went a squad of soldiery as ungainly and tattered as the sentinel whom he had watched that morning, nay, they had not even a common uniform nor an attempted one ; not one was shaven, not one completely buttoned, and Mr. Barr noted with acute irritation that the shoes of some were actually missing ! Such confused thoughts as ran in his mind in the midst of all this babel were a general surmise that this nation (which he knew to be at war) would at once and inevitably suffer an overwhelming defeat. Meanwhile the squad of soldiers in front of him and the long line that loosely held each side of the street continued to impress him less and less favourably and to add to the already considerable discomfort this misadventure caused him. He twice managed to elbow a 'few inches' space and so to consult his watch, though furtively, for he feared it might be stolen. He was very seriously offended to find that it lacked but half an hour of his appointment ; but needs must,

and he shuffled along foot by foot with the procession which he involuntarily headed, now and then shrinking back as best he could when one of the ragged brutes in front of him menaced him with the butt of his musket and cursed him for pressing forward.

It was not until he had been in this situation for some ten minutes that Mr. Barr, who was a short man, appreciated the cause of the commotion. Beyond the squad of soldiery, and showing above their heads, he saw the upper part of a priest's figure, and close to it the upper half of the figure of a seated woman, while showing still higher and standing listlessly beside her was a tall, stout, crop-headed fellow, hatless, and holding loosely in his hand a rope, the other end of which was tied to the woman's pinioned wrists behind her back. He saw by their motion and their eminence that they must all three be in some sort of cart.

In this group, the source and meaning of the whole business, Mr. Barr took but little interest, though he at once perceived that he had got into a criminal business of some kind, and that here was a prisoner being led to prison or perhaps to punishment. He had no intention of remaining in Paris, and his returning energies as noon approached were concentrated upon escaping if possible from the crowd by a side street, and that without injury to himself or delay for his appointment. But though he felt so little interest he could but watch the woman's face whenever a movement in the soldiers in front of him gave him an opportunity.

That face was ashen, emaciated, and distraught ; the eye in the profile towards him was dull and blind, like the eye of some old spent creature ; a few grey hairs escaped from beneath her cap ; they were damp, short and rare, contrasting meanly with the white and newly starched head-dress ; she bent forward from her neck and shoulders, and it would indeed have been hard to say whether she was animate or inanimate. She seemed not to hear the voice of the crowd, and

the priest sitting opposite to her had ceased even his perfunctory gestures, so irresponsive was her face and form. All around this dumb show and hideous, from the crowd, from windows of the tall houses, from the very air, as it seemed, shouts and curses perpetually rang—when suddenly Mr. Barr of Philadelphia saw his opportunity.

They had just passed the house of Robespierre, and the pressure at the head of the column was relieved by a movement in the mob which halted to cheer the Tribune ; a free space of a yard or two was at once formed between the column of the populace and the still advancing tumbril with its ragged guard. Through that space with somewhat undignified speed Mr. Barr darted to the left, and dodging through a line of soldiers found himself in the little lane which flanks the Garde Meuble.

Now he was inside the great doors, a little flushed, but walking with recovered dignity up the stone stairs of that palatial office ; now he was ushered with becoming ceremony into the secretary's room.

Even here he suffered a last annoyance ; these unbusinesslike and gimcrack people were gathered, clerks and secretary and all, at the tall windows that overlooked the Place de la Révolution, and it was with difficulty he could attract their attention. Even when he had done so, they would not leave the panes.

They had some excuse ; they also were watching that tumbril, but they knew, what he did not, that the fainting woman seated there was the Queen.

THE BARRICADE¹

May 1871

[The last three days of the suppression of the Commune consisted in charges by the Regulars against the barricades of the Communists, and among the last of these to be captured were those on the slopes of Montmartre, a high isolated hill on the extreme north of Paris overlooking the whole city.]

IT is not difficult to sleep during the noise of firing when one has got used to it for a few days. They had been used to it at Montmartre continuously for forty-eight hours, and before that during four long months of siege. These forty-eight hours, however, had not been steady as the war had been, but rather a succession without intermission of rifles and of guns, and the perpetual cries of men, and every kind of uproar sounding and booming in the narrow street as the tide does when it rushes upon an angry day up the narrow gorges of the rocks.

Through a whole night of heavy firing a butcher's boy of between sixteen and seventeen had fallen asleep and had slept under the May sky, and had wakened with the early dawn ; he woke to find all silent.

He had been sleeping upon the roadway face downwards with his head upon his crossed arms. He had drunk heavily of bad spirit the night before, as had all but three of the men grouped about him. He staggered to his feet, and one or two of those lying

¹ From *The Eye-Witness*. (Eveleigh Nash.)

around were waking also. Here in a threadbare frock coat was a professor, with dirty linen, haggard face, and a week's growth of beard ; there a non-descript lad, but of the wealthier classes, in clothes that had cost money but were very greasy and torn now, with boots that had burst long ago ; a third was a plain beggar with very wild and staring eyes, with nothing on his body but blue canvas trousers, no shoes upon his feet, no coat upon his back, but a blanket huddled over him. The rest were workmen of varying degrees. There were twenty in all, for that was the number required for a barricade of such a width as theirs had, and to provide the sentries at night.

The barricade was low ; it had not yet been touched by shell ; it was intact save in a place where, the evening before, one furious charge of the Regulars had failed. There some of the lighter stones had slid down and the pole of an omnibus which had been wedged into the structure lay broken. For the rest, I say, it still stood, and was excellent cover. Behind it, upon its northern side and looking down the long street that led to the plain below, a ragged sentry stood armed ; the others also took their rifles, all except one, who did not move when their elected chief called to him, nor even when they came to move him. They found he had died during the night.

A woman came out of the small shop which flanked the barricade ; she was young and smiling and trim, as fresh as the early morning, and one would have said as gay ; she brought coffee for them and would take no pence in exchange. Their rations of bread they already had by them, and there they sat, squatting upon the corner stones, dipping their bread in the coffee, talking little, and saying such words as they had to say in tones that were merely weary, and using oaths that had become quite conventional and thin after the use of the long war.

The sun was through the mist ; the noise reminded one of traffic in the old days of peace ; the noise of

wheels (but they were the wheels of guns) came from the city below, and then, startling this group upon the hill, came, not half a mile away, the sharp rattle of the first fusillade. The fight had begun in the workmen's quarters, eastwards, to the left and below. But in that long street before them, nothing had yet appeared ; all the wooden shutters were set fast in the windows ; all the iron shutters of the shop fronts were locked and barred ; there was complete silence and a complete desertion.

The place which they defended had been carefully chosen. It could not be turned save from a distance which would give ample time to fall back, and the first side street to enter that which they held was two hundred yards or more from their barricade. Out of that side street, cautiously peering round the corner, and showing at first nothing but a shoulder and an eye, came a marine. He came out fully and carefully surveyed the barricade, the men sipping their coffee, the haggard sentry at their side. He was a Breton with high cheek-bones, and slow of thought, though quick of eye. He wished to make his report to his officer usefully and accurately. Hence he continued to note, one by one, the details of the barricade ; its height, its structure, by what windows it was commanded, and the number of those who defended it. A few moments passed thus : he watching, they unconscious, when, all at once, he was seen. He himself saw the sentry's rifle suddenly come up to the shoulder. He saw it endways, and dashed back to cover behind the wall. The shot failed. Then those upon the barricade knelt at even distances and laid the barrels of their Chassepots upon the crevices between the stones, and felt in their pockets for cartridges, loaded, and stood by. They had not long to wait. No bugle blew ; in a bunch rather than a formation the company of Regulars swept round their corner into the street like men flying from a danger rather than like men approaching one ; somewhat separate from them, and running a trifle faster than their foremost man,

was a quite young lieutenant, his uniform so spick and span you would have thought no fighting was on, and his little toy sword gleaming sharply in the air as he cheered. Not thirty shots were fired against them as they poured up the hill, three only hit a man, but one of these shots had struck into the very centre of the charge, another had caught the lieutenant, so that even as he ran forward, and even as he still cheered, he leapt upwards and fell. There was a check just enough to admit confusion, and during that confusion the barricade steadily poured in lead ; but a gap in the steady firing gave the Regulars their chance—those unpractised and lawless men behind the stones were loading all together ; their fire for a few seconds was not nourished, and in just those few seconds the last yards were covered, and the rebels were swarmed upon as water swarms upon the little separate grains of sand when the tide rises upon the beach. There was not one behind the barricade but had three men or four or five upon him (for a full company had charged), and for perhaps a minute the younger men struggled as an animal struggles against those that hold it while the others kill ; the older men had at once gone down. The professor was not killed but caught ; they already had torn off and bound a strip of his own linen tightly around his wrists behind his back, so that his hands were swelling out and blue with congested blood. And in the midst of all this savagery, the youngest of them was shouting as he died ; some screamed disjointed syllables of a chance revolutionary song. The red flag still stood above the blood of the defeat, knotted on to a tall stick planted in the stones ; no one had thought to take it away. Far off up the hill two men were seen running ; why, no one knows or ever will know. Whether they were the rebels, or chance comers, or whatever they were, they were dropped like rabbits, and those were the last shots fired.

This is the way the barricade was taken. It was

still quite, quite early in the morning, the spring air was still quite pure and clean ; no smoke was yet rising from those further quarters of the city below which the Law had recovered two days before. From the moment when the marine had first taken his little look to that in which the last two shots had dropped the runaways, about five minutes altogether had passed.

So much for what happened in 1871 ; one of the hundred things that happened, each very much like all the others during that astonishing reconquest of the town. . . . But if I were to end here I should not be telling quite all the story, nor helping my readers to understand altogether the true character of these foreign men.

Exactly thirty years later, in a villa close to the River Seine, near Mantes, I dined with a man who was brother to this young lieutenant who had been killed, and there was present an old and rather decrepit gentleman of the University who had been among those upon the barricade and who had been captured ; he had been condemned to death, transported, a refugee in London, amnestied and was now still working at his mathematics in the Rue des Ecoles ; he no longer lectured, but he still gave private lessons. And these two, all during dinner, would talk of nothing else but the Commune : my host, whose brother had been hit among the Regulars during the charge, condemning it ; the aged professor, upon the other hand, defending its ideal with all his strength. It was a heated argument. Neither understood how to reconcile party differences with the harmony of social life ; for quite an hour they angrily debated the past. Later, however, they turned to talk of fishing, and it relieved me, for I am not used to political debate, nor had I ever clearly known what the Commune was all about.

TRAVEL

PYRENEAN HOSTELRIES¹

ON the high road into Rousillon choose Porté, primitive as it is, and avoid *Hospitalet* (on the hither side of the pass of Puymorens) like the plague. Hospitalet and the village just before it, Merens, are for some reason or other quite spoilt ; I fancy tourists come up so far as these two without going over the pass which they find too much trouble, and that their coming and going has spoilt the two places : at any rate they are detestable. They overcharge you and treat you with contempt at the same time.

Porté, though it is but a few miles further on, is quite different. Here is one rude inn, as cheap as the grace of God, and kept by the most honest people in the world ; Michet by name. It is thoroughly Spanish in character (for remember that Porté, though politically in France, is on the Spanish side of the main range, and that the pass just above is on the watershed) ; the animals live on the ground floor, the human beings just above them. You will never regret to have slept at Porté.

As you go on into the plain of the Cerdagne you will find a good inn at La Tour Carol : not exactly enthusiastic in their greeting of the traveller, but polite. It is quite a little place of only half a thousand inhabitants, and you cannot expect much from it, but it is better than Saillagousse, where they are most unwilling.

Up the road to France from Saillagousse, at Mont Louis, is a hotel of which I can speak but little because

¹ From *The Pyrenees*.

my only experience of it was late on a holiday night, when everything was very full, but it is substantial, it is cheap and I have heard it praised. It is called the Hotel de France, and it is a starting-point for the omnibus down to the railhead at Villefranche in the valley above which rise the flanks of the Canigou.

On the Canigou itself, standing upon a platform a few hundred feet below the summit facing the Mediterranean and one of the greatest views in this world, there is now an inn which you must not despise though it does happen to be somewhat tourist. It is only open for the end of June, July, August and September, though one can sleep there at other times of the year if one asks at Prades for the housekeeper ; he comes down to that town through the winter and is known there.

In Perpignan (by the way) go to the chief hotel, for the hotels of that plain can be very vile when they try. This hotel is called "The Grand," and it stands on the quay of the smaller river just within the old fortifications. There is a delightful little restaurant in Perpignan called the Golden Lion, it is well to order what one wants some hours beforehand, and to take their own recommendation about wine. Perpignan is so twirled and knotted a town that I can give no directions for finding that Golden Lion, where it lies in its little back alley called the Rue des Cardeurs, save to tell you that it is but two hundred yards from your hotel, and that the Rue des Cardeurs is the second on the *left* as you walk away from the main front of the cathedral ; or again, the *first* on the left after you have crossed the Place Gambetta. Anyhow, Perpignan is a small place and anyone will show you where this eating house is, and it is a good one. Down the Cerdagne in Spain, at Seo de Urgel, there are two or three hotels, and one of the second class called the Posada Universal, or Universal Inn, which merits its name ; you will do well to stop there for it has a pleasant balcony overlooking the valley, with vines trained about it ; and the people look after you.

As to the inns of Andorra your best plan is to stop in the capital, that is, in *Andorra The Old* itself, where the Posada is called the Posada *Calounes*, and is quite a little and simple place. The entry into Andorra, however, is not always easy. If you make it from the north, mist may delay you, even on the grassy Embalire Pass, and may keep you for hours on the higher crossings of the range, even when it does not defeat you altogether. You may therefore have no choice but to stop at one of the little villages ; but it is a poor fate, for they are full of bugs and fleas and appalling cooking, though the people are kindly enough. The inn at Encamps is the only one with which I am myself acquainted among these smaller places ; there also it is vile.

I have omitted so far to speak of the inns in the Sobrarbe. That of Venasque is the largest and most used to travellers. Like all Spanish inns the life of the people is upstairs and the life of the animals below. It is clean and seems to be continually full of people, for there is quite a traffic to and from this mountain town. The inn has no name in particular that I know of, but you cannot miss it. Guide books call it "Des Touristes," but I never heard anyone in Venasque give it that name. You have but to ask for the Posada, however, and anyone will show it to you. It is in the first street on the left out of the main street as you come into the town. As to the cost of it, it is neither cheap nor dear ; but (as I have said is common to the Spanish Inns), it is a little on the side of dear-ness. A friend of mine with three companions and two mules found himself let in for over three pounds for one night's hospitality ; on the other hand, I myself, some years after, with two companions passed two nights and the day between with everything that we wanted to eat, smoke and drink, and we came out for under two pounds. The mules perhaps consume.

In all Sobrarbe there are but the inns of Bielsa and Torla (I mean in all the upper valleys which I have described) that can be approached without fear, and

in Bielsa, as in Venasque and in Torla, the little place has but one. At Bielsa it is near the bridge and is kept by Padro Perlos ; I have not slept in it but I believe it to be clean and good. El Plan has a Posada called the Posada of the Sun (*del Sol*), but it is not praised ; nay, it is detested by those who speak from experience. The inn that stands or stood at the lower part of the Val d'Arazas is said to be good ; that at Torla is not so much an inn as an old chief's house or manor called that of " Viu," for that is the name of the family that owns it. They treat travellers very well.

That is all that I know of the inns of the Pyrenees

THE LITTLE SHIPS¹

OF this eastern spirit, which is still by far the strongest to be found in the states of Barbary, an influence meets one long before one has made land. The little ships all up and down the Mediterranean, and especially as one nears the African coast, are in their rig and their whole manner Arabian.

There is a sort of sail which may be called the original of all sails. It is the sail with which antiquity was familiar. It brought the ships to Tenedos and the Argo carried it. The Norwegians had it when they were pirates a thousand years ago. They have it still. It is nearer a lug-sail than anything else, and indeed our Deal luggers carry something very near it. It is almost a square sail, but the yard has a slight rake and there is a bit of a peak to it. It is the kind of sail which seems to come first into the mind of any man when he sets out to use the wind. It is to be seen continually to-day hoisted above small boats in the north of Europe.

But this sail is too simple. It will not go close to the wind, and in those light and variable airs which somehow have no force along the deck, it hangs empty and makes no way because it has no height.

Now when during that great renaissance of theirs in the seventh century the Arabs left their deserts and took to the sea, they became for a short time in sailing, as in philosophy, the teachers of their new subjects. They took this sail which they had found in all the

¹ From *Esto Perpetua*.

ports they had conquered along this coast—in Alexandria, in Cyrene, in Carthage, in Cæsarea—they lightened and lengthened the yard, they lifted the peak up high, they clewed down the foot, and very soon they had that triangular *lateen* sail which will, perhaps, remain when every other evidence of their early conquering energy has disappeared. With such a sail they drove those first fleets of theirs which gave them at once the islands and the commerce of the Mediterranean. It was the sail which permitted their invasion of the northern shores and the unhappy subjection of Spain.

We Europeans have for now some seven hundred years, from at least the Third Crusade, so constantly used this gift of Islam that we half forget its origin. You may see it in all the Christian harbours of the Mediterranean to-day, in every port of the Portuguese coast, and here and there as far north as the Channel. It is not to be seen beyond Cherbourg, but in Cherbourg it is quite common. The harbour-boats that run between the fleet and the shore hoist these lateens. Yet it is not of our own making, and, indeed, it bears a foreign mark which is very distinct, and which puzzles every northerner when first he comes across this sail : it reefs along the yard. Why it should do so neither history nor the men that handle it can explain, since single sails are manifestly made to reef from the foot to the leach, where a man can best get at them. Not so the *ateen*. If you carry too much canvas and the wind is pressing her you must take it in from aloft, or, it must be supposed, lower the whole on deck. And this foreign, quaint, unusual thing which stamps the lateen everywhere is best seen when the sail is put away in harbour. It does not lie down along the deck as do ours in the north, but right up along the yard, and the yard itself is kept high at the masthead, making a great bow across the sky, and (one would say) tempting Providence to send a gale and wreck it. Save for this mark—which may have its uses, but seems to have none and to be merely

barbaric—the lateen is perfect in its kind, and might be taken with advantage throughout the world (as it is throughout all this united sea) for the uniform sail. For this kind of sail is, for small craft, the neatest and the swiftest in the world, and, in a general way, will lie closer to the wind than any other. Our own fore-and-aft rig is nothing else but a lateen cut up into mainsail, foresail and jib, for the convenience of handling.

The little ships, so rigged, come out like heralds far from the coast to announce the old dominion of the East and of the religion that made them: of the united civilization that has launched them over all its seas, from east of India to south of Zanzibar and right out here in the western place which we are so painfully recovering. They are the only made thing, the only *form* we accepted from the Arab: and we did well to accept it. The little ships are a delight.

You see them everywhere. They belong to the sea and they animate it. They are similar as waves are similar: they are different as waves are different. They come into a hundred positions against the light. They heel and run with every mode of energy.

There is nothing makes a man's heart so buoyant as to see one of the little ships bowling along breast-high towards him, with the wind and the clouds behind it, careering over the sea. It seems to have borrowed something of the air and something of the water, and to unite them both and to be their offspring and also their bond. When they are middle-way over the sea towards one, under a good breeze, the little ships are things to remember.

So it is when they carry double sail and go, as we say of our schooners, "wing and wing." For they can carry two sails when the wind is moderate, and especially when the vessel is running before it, but these two sails are not carried upon two masts, but both upon the same mast. The one is the common or working sail, carried in all weathers. The other is a sort of spinnaker, of which you may see the yard

lying along decks in harbour or triced up a little by the halyard, so as to swing clear of the hands.

When the little ships come up like this with either sail well out and square and their course laid straight before the general run of a fresh sea, rolling as they go, it is as though the wind had a friend and companion of its own, understanding all its moods, so easily and rapidly do they arrive towards the shore. A little jib (along this coast at least) is bent along the forestay, and the dark line of it marks the swing and movement of the whole. So also when you stand and look from along their wake and see them leaving for the horizon along a slant of the Levantine, with the breeze just on their quarter and their laden hulls careening a trifle to leeward, you would say they were great birds, born of the sea, and sailing down the current from which they were bred. The peaks of their tall sails have a turn to them like the wing-tips of birds, especially of those darting birds which come up to us from the south after winter and shoot along their way.

Moreover the sails of these little ships never seem to lose the memory of power. Their curves and fullness always suggest a movement of the hull. Very often at sunset when the dead calm reflects things unbroken like an inland pond, the topmast angle of these lateens catches some hesitating air that stirs above, and leads it down the sail, so that a little ripple trembles round the bows of the boat, though all the water beside them is quite smooth, and you see her gliding in without oars. She comes along in front of the twilight, as gradual and as silent as the evening, and seems to be impelled by nothing more substantial than the advance of darkness.

It is with such companions to proclaim the title of the land that one comes round under a point of hills and enters harbour.

FICTION

LORD BENTHORPE

WERE it my task (which I thank Heaven it is not) to compose a work of fiction, I should attempt to exclude all persons and scenes irrelevant to the simple current of my story. The more suitable, but I fear less entertaining, relation upon which I am engaged permits no such artistic selection : I am compelled to describe all those who in any principal way entered the last days of Mr. Burden's life, and, delicate as is the business of portraying a living peer and politician, it is my duty to present (with all the reticence and courtesy due to such a figure) the character of Lord Benthorpe.

To this end I must first sketch, in the most summary manner, that distinguished family history upon which depends no small part of the affection and esteem in which all Englishmen delight to hold him.

A subtle admixture of talent and inherited rank is to-day more than ever the strength of our folk. Nor do I fear to offend the modern taste by printing here the typical record of a great line.

Lord Benthorpe's family is first heard of more than a century ago. His grandfather, John Calvin Benthorpe, was, at the close of December 1796, a young solicitor in the town of Dublin. In the very next year we find him put into the Irish Parliament by the Duke of Meath as a recognition of his strong sympathy with the national aspirations of the time, and, Presbyterian as he was, with the legitimate demands for

¹ From *Emmanuel Burden*.

religious emancipation preferred by the bulk of his fellow-citizens : co-religionists of his Grace.

His fine talents and excellent appreciation of men soon won him a political position independent of his early patron ; and he had the good fortune to be instrumental, both as a principal and as a shrewd negotiator, in the passing of the Act of Union. He had indeed permitted himself certain rhetorical exercises against that measure in debate ; but, in the hard practical matter of voting, his inheritance of Scotch common-sense had outweighed his Irish enthusiasm, and he soon found himself in a position to purchase an estate in Wiltshire, some fifteen miles to the north-east of Old Sarum.

A character too weighty, and perhaps too sincerely Christian, to feel in middle age the continued attraction of political life, he applied himself rather to the founding of a family worthy of the title which his Majesty King George III. had, at the respectful entreaty of Mr. Pitt, conferred upon him.

With this object, he considered for some years the contracting of a suitable marriage, and, after a deliberation whose purpose he was far too chivalrous to conceal, he decided to honour from among many, and to lead to the altar the charming Laetitia Green, only child of Mr. Green, senior partner in the well-known banking firm of Strong-i'-th'-arm and Hurst.

His wife's and his own remaining fortune he sank in further purchases of land, and in the erection of a very fine mansion in the Debased Pa'ladian manner. This great house (to which its owner first attached the name of Placton) is not only famous with most educated men, but will also be familiar to the general reader from its frequent appearance in the *Memoirs of Lady Graftham*, and in the *Life of Mr. Green*, recently published by his nephew, Lord Hurst of Hatton.

George Patrick Frederick Culson Delamaine, the fruit of this marriage, was born in 1823, at a moment when his father, the first Lord Benthorpe, was at the zenith of his career as a landowner. All the gifts of

fortune seemed to have been showered upon the boy ; his youth was leading to a manhood of the most brilliant promise, when, at the age of twenty-two, romance or folly led him into an alliance with a woman hopelessly beneath him in station.

She was the daughter of some local lawyer or other, and so betrayed in every accent and gesture, the restrictions of her upbringing as to be incapable of that moulding influence which her father-in-law's family had hoped to exercise. Her rare visits to Placton grew to be an increasing embarrassment for the spacious dignity of the household, and it was perhaps but a merciful intervention of Providence when she was left a widow in June 1852 as the result of her husband walking inadvertently into the well of a lift : a new invention to which the upper classes were as yet unaccustomed.

He left two children : Mary, born in February 1847, and Albert Delamaine (the present Lord Benthorpe), born in July 1849.

To these children the old man showed a peculiar and a noble devotion. He paid the mother a yearly allowance of no less than four hundred pounds, on the strict condition that she should live out of England, and enter into no communication with the family. He was even at the charge of employing private agents to see that this condition was observed.

In the choice of their occupations, their servants, their expenses, their very lap-dogs, nay, their governesses and tutors, he directed himself to the single object of making the boy and girl that which their high station would later require them to be ; dying in 1858, he left his task as a sacred legacy to his wife, the children's grandmother, who kept in view, with admirable firmness, that ideal of ancient lineage which her husband had so constantly cherished.

Not that any hint of their coming responsibility was permitted to enter the children's fresh young minds. Mary, until her seventeenth birthday, dressed upon less than a hundred a year ; rode out attended by a

groom in the plainest livery; and was permitted upon no occasion, save that of indisposition, to absent herself from morning prayers. Albert was thrust willy-nilly into the rough and tumble of public school life, and discovered, in the rude manliness of Eton, just what was needed to correct a somewhat oversensitive temperament.

In a word, the first Lord Benthorpe had proved characteristically successful in this his last and (as it proved) posthumous task.

His wife lived to purchase her grandchild his commission in a cavalry regiment, and to see the second Lord Benthorpe attain his majority amid those plaudits which the tenants of Placton loyally reserved for a family to which they owe their material and moral prosperity.

As a soldier, young Lord Benthorpe, though quiet to a fault, proved deservedly popular. His entertainments, which were numerous, were marked by an absolute refinement, and, if he exceeded in expense, it was through no leaning towards ostentation, but rather from the natural desire of a rich and reserved young man to gather, by the sole means in his power, a number of acquaintance.

He was sincerely glad when his regiment was ordered abroad; he saw active service in the Seychelles, he received in person the surrender of seventeen half-breeds of Princess Martha's Own during the great mutiny of 1872, and was mentioned in dispatches. His wound, in the fleshy part of the leg, received during the dreadful affair at Pútti-Ghâl, is a matter so generally known that I need hardly allude to it, save to remind my readers that the incident is the subject of a fine steel engraving of Hogge's now sold in its original state by Messrs Washington for the price of 21s., though soiled copies are obtainable at a considerable reduction.

Towards the end of the year 1875, when he was but twenty-six years old, he thought it his duty to sever his connexion with the army and to enter

politics. To this piece of self-sacrifice must be ascribed, I fear, all the future misfortunes of his life.

He married.

Warned, I do not say by his father's example, but doubtless by some instinct, he took to wife the Lady Arabella Hunt, of an age not far distant from his own, of descent a trifle superior, of a fortune which permitted him—I fear imprudently—to rebuild the stables.

Such of my readers as may find their lot cast upon the clayey, the calcareous, or the oolitic soils of our beloved country, will appreciate what I mean when I allude to the agricultural depression which afflicted the years immediately subsequent to his marriage.

Lord Benthorpe, like so many others of his ancient station, refused to believe that the star of England had set. He was too generous to reduce his splendid hospitality; too patriotic to admit that the country and he could go otherwise than forward; too proud of his superb lineage to regret the investments in arable land, pasture, undergrowth, common, waste and marsh which his forefathers had made. He did indeed attempt to develop a small town in his neighbourhood which boasted a medicinal well. He bought certain freeholds within the borough, and the medical profession were enthusiastic in their praise of the waters. The less healthy of the governing classes began to drink them in increasing numbers; but that fatality which seemed to dog his every effort caused an epidemic of acute colic to coincide with the second year of his effort, and he lost upon this chivalrous venture the considerable sum of two hundred thousand pounds.

He borrowed.

At first, for his daily needs, from local banks; later, to repay their claims and to set himself afloat again, from the more imposing corporations of the metropolis; from these he received such aid as he imagined would carry him forward to a better day. But that day tarried.

He maintained his rents with difficulty. He

attempted to increase them. He lost the affection of his tenants, a disaster for which the remaining respect of his equals scarcely compensated him. He was finally compelled to abandon, most reluctantly, the society of public entertainers, political, literary and racing men, to which all his early manhood had rendered him familiar. He grew to inviting to Placton none but those to whom no other hospitality offered. When these failed him, he fell back upon his relatives ; when these, upon the local clergy, the smaller squires—the very doctors of his country town. It was of no avail !

The government of Lord Beaconsfield, ever solicitous for the honour of an ancient name, did all that could be done. He was offered posts well suited to his talents ; he was eagerly welcomed back to public life. Indeed, it was his public work during the first years of his difficulties—the last of the Conservative cabinet—which has rendered his name so familiar to all of us. How young he was in those brave days ! How admirably did he support, and with what courage, the singular place Great Britain vaunted in that better time !

I may be excused some enthusiasm as I recall his speech at Salisbury upon “Peace with Honour,” his piloting of the Laundry Bill through the House of Lords, his contribution to the Party funds during the Midlothian campaign, a contribution which I know from personal evidence to have been made possible only by the courtesy of the present Marquis of Bramber, then better known as “Jim.”

Certainly he loved his country. It is to the honour of our party system that the Liberal Ministry of the eighties did not misunderstand a patriotism of this calibre. He was sent to Raub, to the Marranagoes, to Pilgrim’s Island : positions which the routine of our Permanent Service will not permit to be highly paid, but which should normally offer ample opportunities for experience. This experience he acquired—but, alas ! unfruitfully. Nothing he touched succeeded.

On his return to England after an absence of three years, he abandoned his official work that he might be freer to retrieve his fortunes. His connexion with Colonial Government should have aided him in the financial development of our dependencies. His advice was, indeed, solicited by the promoters of companies, but it proved almost invariably unfortunate.

True to the straight line of honour in which he had been brought up, he refused to be mentioned publicly in connexion with the Raub Central, the Marranagoes Guanios, or the Pilgrim's Island Oil Syndicate. They all went down; but, through that mysterious bond which permits the outer public to scent out, as it were, whatever the City privately honours, his reputation, already great with experts, became general when he permitted his name to stand at the head of the Carria Canal Company. It is no small testimony to the probity of our public life that he benefited in no way from the rapid success of that enterprise. He was paid an honest salary—a small salary; he demanded no more. It pushed his name to the very front rank of our Builders of Empire. I would it had done more. It failed.

Lady Benthorpe held the helm meanwhile unflinchingly in her large grasp. She was of that kind which old Sutter finely calls "strong women of the Lord"; of that kind which devised the motto: "*Homo sum: nihil humanum a me alienum puto.*" To the last she kept an open political drawing-room, of considerable if decreasing account with the literary and professional classes, using for that purpose in winter the town house of her sister, but during the season the large room of the Progress Galleries, to the left—on the first landing.

Most women, under such a strain, would have abandoned the struggle. Many would have demanded the adventitious aid of stimulating drugs. Her pride disdained it.

She sought the relief of which she stood in need from wines of the more hygienic sort, especially the

lighter sparkling wines so strongly recommended by the Faculty ; and even to such medicine she forbore to have recourse until the years of decline, when the frail body could no longer support the indomitable soul within.

Her doctor was fully cognizant of her need. He has assured me that the last sad months owed their tragedy to nothing more than the exhaustion of that admirable brain.

To the very end she was occasionally present at her husband's table, though her conversation was no longer of the sobriety which once lent a special distinction to that board ; and when Lord Benthorpe found it necessary in 1886 to step once more upon the platform in defence of the integrity of the Empire—or, as it was then called, the Kingdom—she accompanied him several times. It was with difficulty that she was persuaded to abandon her design to appear at the great meeting in the Albert Hall.

She died in February 1887, at the early age of forty-one years, three months and two days.

Her end, though clouded by the most grievous nervous trouble, was comforted and enlightened by the presence of two beings whom it would be ignoble to dismiss from this record without a passing mention : Mr. Warner, the amiable scholar, to whom (as his former tutor) Lord Benthorpe had presented the living of Great Monckton, at the very gates of the park, and his wife, Mrs. Warner, whose wonderful little book, "Hours of Healing," wafted the spirit of the dying peeress from earth to heaven.

It has been remarked that the difficulty of pronouncing the aspirates in the title of this spiritual work betrayed a novice in the art of letters. I am not competent to adjudge upon this criticism ; but, if it be well found, I may at least point out the marvel of a faith which could redeem any ignorance of mere composition, and infuse so exalted a quality into the prose of an untried pen.

Lord Benthorpe, thus left a widower, with his little son Charles no more than four years old, applied himself to his public work with a redoubled zeal. His weight in Hampshire during the early nineties, when that great agricultural county was, I regret to say, flirting with Home Rule, cannot be overestimated; yet it formed but a slight part of his beneficent influence. His speeches in the House of Lords recalled the old days when he had been entrusted by the Government with the Bill to which allusion has been made; and it was confidently predicted that, on the restoration of his Party to power, he would be given some post in the Cabinet.

These hopes were not fulfilled. His disappointment appeared the more bitter when he considered how widely the journalists upon whom he had wasted his attentions had recently spread his public reputation; it appeared appalling when he contemplated the condition of his fortunes. For, it must be admitted (though it cuts one to the heart to expose the humiliation of a man so prominent in our commonweal) that, towards 1895, Lord Benthorpe found himself deprived of all resources whatsoever. The interest upon his various mortgages was met precisely, in good years, by the rent of his land and the products of the home farm. In bad years by these combined with the letting of Placton—a source alas! too often insufficient.

Our society does not permit men to fall unaided. If this is true of the generality of citizens, it is still more true of those whose names seem to stand for the stability of the country itself. Help was immediately found. The management of the house and estate was taken over (together with the mortgages) by the Anglo-Saxon Loan and Investment Company, with which, by a happy coincidence, the name of Mr. Barnett was prominently associated. The house and grounds were kept by this financial company in a condition worthy of the name they bore; and Lord Benthorpe was generously permitted to make them his permanent home, not only from a sentiment of what

was due to the dignity of his name, but also from a consideration of the added value which he lent to the premises by his continued residence.

I do not mention this magnanimity on the part of a group of business men in order to impair their reputation for shrewdness and commercial capacity. Everything, down to the wages of the servants, passed through their hands ; and they had made it a condition—a condition to which Lord Benthorpe very readily agreed—that even for such small hospitalities as he might desire to extend to neighbours he should, in every case, receive the written permission of the mortgagees.

Lord Benthorpe, at the moment when the great affair of the M'Korio entered the arena of politics, bore an appearance which those unaccustomed to our administrative classes might have mistaken for weakness.

His figure, very tall and spare, was crowned by a head in which the length of the face was perhaps the most prominent characteristic. His thin aquiline nose, his pale grey eyes, set close together and drooping somewhat at the corners, would not of themselves have led to so false a judgment, nor would the shape and position of his ears, to which the narrowness of the head and the sparseness of the hair lent perhaps an undue prominence ; it was rather his mouth, which, from an unfortunate habit, he maintained permanently half open, thus displaying somewhat long and projecting teeth, which met at a slight angle, as do those of the smaller rodents. A slight growth upon the upper lip emphasized the unfortunate character of this feature, whose misleading effect was further heightened by a nervous trick of drumming or tapping continually with the fingers, commonly upon his knee, but sometimes upon the table, or whatever else might offer itself to his hand.

As for his attitude, he would most commonly be seen sitting with one leg crossed over the other, and in an inclination of body that gave no hint of the

intellectual energy which had inspired so many years.

I say that a foreigner imperfectly acquainted with our polity, and even the less experienced among our own fellow citizens, would not have guessed what power and initiative the whole picture concealed; but those of us who remember the annexation of Raub, the firm hand which suppressed the mutiny in the Seychelles, the disappointment of Germany in the Marranagoes, the settlement of Pilgrim's Island, and especially the dreadful affair of Pútti-Ghâl, are not slow to recognize in Lord Benthorpe, elements of that which has brought our country to its present position among the nations.

THE OBLIQUE METHOD

THE SHORT LYRIC¹

MANY Guides to Literature give no rules for the manufacture of short lyrics, and nearly all of them omit to furnish the student with an example of this kind of composition.

The cause of this unfortunate neglect (as I deem it) is not far to seek. Indeed in one Text Book (Mrs. Railston's *Book for Beginners*. Patteson. 12s. 6d.) it is set down in so many words. "The Short Lyric," says Mrs. Railston in her preface, "is practically innocent of pecuniary value. Its construction should be regarded as a pastime rather than as serious exercise; and even for the purposes of recreation, its fabrication is more suited to the leisure of a monied old age than to the struggle of eager youth, or the full energies of a strenuous manhood" (p. xxxiv.).

The judgment here pronounced is surely erroneous. The Short Lyric is indeed not very saleable (though there are exceptions even to that rule—the first Lord Tennyson is said to have received two hundred pounds for *The Throstle*); it is (I say) not very saleable, but it is of great indirect value to the writer, especially in early youth. A reputation can be based upon a book of short lyrics which will in time procure for its author Reviewing work upon several newspapers, and sometimes, towards his fortieth year, the editorship of a magazine; later in life it will often lead to a pension, to the command of an army corps, or even to the governorship of a colony.

¹ From *Caliban's Guide to Letters* ("The Aftermath"). (Duckworth & Co.).

I feel, therefore, no hesitation in describing at some length the full process of its production, or in presenting to the student a careful plan of the difficulties which will meet him at the outset.

To form a proper appreciation of these last, it is necessary to grasp the fundamental fact that they all proceed from the inability of busy editors and readers to judge the quality of verse ; hence the rebuffs and delays that so often overcast the glorious morning of the Poetic Soul.

At the risk of some tedium—for the full story is of considerable length—I will show what is their nature and effect, in the shape of a relation of what happened to Mr. Peter Gurney some years ago, before he became famous.

Mr. Peter Gurney (I may say it without boasting) is one of my most intimate friends. He is, perhaps, the most brilliant of that brilliant group of young poets which includes Mr. John Stewart, Mr. Henry Hawk, etc., and which is known as the "Cobbley school," from the fact that their historic meeting-ground was the house of Mr. Thomas Cobbley, himself no mean poet, but especially a creative, seminal critic, and uncle of Mr. Gurney. But to my example and lesson :—

Mr. Gurney was living in those days in Bloomsbury, and was occupied in reading for the bar.

He was by nature slothful and unready, as is indeed the sad habit of literary genius ; he rose late, slept long, ate heartily, drank deeply, read newspapers, began things he never finished, and wrote the ending of things whose beginnings he never accomplished ; in a word, he was in every respect the man of letters. He looked back continually at the stuff he had written quite a short time before, and it always made him hesitate in his opinion of what he was actually engaged in. It was but six months before the events herein set down that he had written—

" The keep of the unconquerable mind "—

only to discover that it was clap-trap and stolen from Wordsworth at that. How, then, could he dare send off the sonnet—

“ If all intent of unsubstantial art ”—

and perhaps get it printed in *The Nineteenth Century* or *The North American Review*, when (for all he knew) it might really be very poor verse indeed ?

These two things, then, his sloth and his hesitation in criticism, prevented Peter from sending out as much as he should have done. But one fine day of last summer, a kind of music passed into him from universal nature, and he sat down and wrote these remarkable lines :—

“ He is not dead ; the leaders do not die,
But rather, lapt in immemorial ease
Of merit consummate, they passing, stand ;
And rapt from rude reality, remain ;
And in the flux and eddy of time, are still.
Therefore I call it consecrated sand
Wherein they left their prints, nor overgrieve ;
An heir of English earth let English earth receive.”

He had heard that *Culture* of Boston, Mass., U.S.A., paid more for verse than any other review, so he sent it off to that address, accompanied by a very earnest little letter, calling the gem “ Immortality,” and waiting for the answer.

The editor of *Culture* is a businesslike man, who reads his English mail on the quay at New York, and takes stamped envelopes and rejection forms down with him to the steamers. He looked up Peter's name in the *Red Book*, *Who's Who*, *Burke*, the *Court Guide*, and what not, and finding it absent from all these he took it for granted that there was no necessity for any special courtesies ; Peter therefore, fifteen days after sending off his poem, received an envelope whose stamp illustrated the conquest of the Philippines by an Armed Liberty, while in the top left-

hand corner were printed these simple words : " If not delivered within three days, please return to Box 257, Boston, Mass., U.S.A."

He was very pleased to get this letter. It was the first reply he had ever got from an editor, and he took it up unopened to the Holborn, to read it during lunch. But there was very little to read. The original verse had folded round it a nice half-sheet of cream-laid notepaper, with a gold *fleur de lis* in the corner, and underneath the motto, " Devoir Fera " ; then, in the middle of the sheet, three or four lines of fine copper-plate engraving, printed also in gold, and running as follows :—

" The editor of *Culture* regrets that he is unable to accept the enclosed contribution ; it must not be imagined that any adverse criticism or suggestion is thereby passed upon the work ; pressure of space, the previous acceptance of similar matter, and other causes having necessarily to be considered."

Peter was so much encouraged by this, that he sent his verses at once to Mr. McGregor, changing, however, the word " rude " in the fourth line to " rough," and adding a comma after " rapt," points insignificant in themselves, perhaps, but indicative of a critic's ear, and certain (as he thought) to catch the approval of the distinguished scholar. In twenty-four hours he got his reply, in the shape of an affectionate letter, enclosing his MSS. :—

" MY DEAR PETER,—No ; I should be doing an injustice to my readers if I were to print your verse in *The Doctrinaire* ; but you must not be discouraged by this action on my part. You are still very young, and no one who has followed (as you may be sure I have) your brilliant career at the University can doubt your ultimate success in whatever profession you undertake. But the path of letters is a stony one, and the level of general utility in such work is only reached by

the most arduous efforts. I saw your Aunt Phœbe the other day, and she was warm in your praises. She told me you were thinking of becoming an architect ; I sincerely hope you will, for I believe you have every aptitude for that profession. Plod on steadily and I will go warrant for your writing verse with the best of them. It is *in vitable*, my dear Peter, that one's early verse should be imitative and weak ; but you have the 'inner voice,' do but follow the gleam and never allow your first enthusiasms to grow dim.

" Always your Father's Old Friend,

" ARCHIBALD WELLINGTON MCGREGOR."

Peter was a little pained by this ; but he answered it very politely, inviting himself to lunch on the following Thursday, and then, turning to his verses, he gave the title " Dead," and sent them to *The Patriot*, from whom he got no reply for a month.

He then wrote to the editor of *The Patriot* on a post-card, and said that, in view of the present deplorable reaction in politics, he feared the verses, if they were held over much longer, would lose their point. Would *The Patriot* be so kind, then, as to let him know what they proposed to do with the Poem ?

He got a reply the same evening :—

" 36A CLARE MARKET, W.C.

" *Telephone* 239.

" *Telegraph*, 'Vindex.'

" DR SIR,—Your estd. favor to hand. No stamp being enclosed with verses, we have retained same, but will forward on receipt of two stamps, including cost of this. Faithfully yrs.,

" ALPHONSE RIPHRAIM.

" Please note change of address."

By this Peter Gurney was so angered that he walked straight over to his club, rang up No. 239, and told the editor of *The Patriot*, personally, by word of mouth, and with emphasis, that he was a Pro-Boer ; then he

rang off before that astonished foreigner had time to reply.

But men of Mr. Peter Gurney's stamp are not cast down by these reverses. He remembered one rather low and insignificant sheet called *The Empire*, in which a vast number of unknown names had been appearing at the bottom of ballads, sonnets, and so forth, dealing mainly with the foreign policy of Great Britain, to which country (as being their native land) the writers were apparently warmly attached.

Peter Gurney flattered himself that he understood why *The Empire* made a speciality of beginners. It was a new paper with little capital, and thought (wisely enough) that if it printed many such juvenilia it would, among the lot, strike some vein of good verse. He had heard of such ventures in journalism, and remembered being told that certain sonnets of Mr. Lewis Morris, and even the earlier poems of Tennyson, were thus buried away in old magazines. He copied out his verses once more, gave them the new title "*Aspiro*," and sent them to *The Empire*. He got a very polite letter in reply:—

"DEAR MR.—,—I have read your verses with much pleasure, and see by them that the praise I have heard on all sides of your unpublished work was not unmerited. Unfortunately, *The Empire* cannot afford to pay anything for its verse; and so large has been the demand upon our space, that we have been compelled to make it a rule that all contributions of this nature should pay a slight premium to obtain a space in our columns. But for this it would be impossible to distinguish between competitors without the risk of heartburnings and petty jealousies. We enclose our scale of charges, which are (as you see) purely nominal, and remain, awaiting your order to print,
yours truly,
WILLIAM POWER."

I need hardly tell you that Peter, on receiving this letter, put two farthings into an envelope addressed

to William Power and was careful not to register or stamp it.

As for his Poem, he changed the title to "They Live!" and sent it to the editor of *Criticism*. Next day he was not a little astonished to get his verses back, folded up in the following waggish letter:—

" THE LAURELS,
" 20 POPLAR GROVE, S.W.
" Monday, the 21st of April.
" SIR,

I am directed by the editor
To say that lack of space and press of matter
Forbid his using your delightful verses,
Which, therefore, he returns. Believe me still
Very sincerely yours, NATHANIEL PICKERSGILL."

Now not a little disconsolate, young Mr. Gurney went out into the street, and thought of *Shavings* as a last chance. *Shavings* gave a guinea to the best poem on a given subject, and printed some of the others sent in. This week he remembered the subject was a eulogy of General Whitelock. He did not hesitate therefore to recast his poem, and to call it a "Threnody" on that commander, neglecting, by a poetic fiction, the fact that he was alive, and even looking well after his eight months of hard work against the Warra-Muggas. He went into the great buildings where *Shavings* is edited, and saw a young man opening with immense rapidity a handbarrowful of letters, while a second sorted them with the speed of lightning, and a third tied them into neat bundles of five hundred each, and placed them in pigeon-holes under their respective initial letters.

"Pray, sir," said Peter to the first of these three men, "what are you doing?" "I am," replied the functionary, "just finishing my week's work" (for it was a Saturday morning), "and in the course of these four hours alone I am proud to say that I have opened

no less than seven thousand three hundred and two poems on our great Leader, some of which, indeed, have been drawn from the principal English poets, but the greater part of which are, I am glad to say, original."

Embittered by such an experience, my friend Gurney returned to his home and wrote that same afternoon the Satire on Modern Literature, in which he introduces his own verses as an example and warning, and on which, as all the world knows, his present fame reposes.

To-day everyone who reads these lines is envious of Mr. Peter Gurney's fame. He is the leader of the whole Cobbler school, the master of his own cousin, Mr. Peter Davey, and without question the model upon which Mr. Henry Hawk, Mr. Daniel Witton, and Mr. John Stuart have framed their poetic manner. He suffered and was strong. He condescended to prose, and kept his verse in reserve. The result no poet can ignore.

I should but mislead the student were I to pretend that Mr. Peter Gurney achieved his present reputation—a reputation perhaps somewhat exaggerated, but based upon real merit and industry—by any spontaneous effort. Hard, regular, unflinching labour in this, as in every other profession, is the condition of success. But the beginner may say (and with justice), "It is not enough to tell me to work; how should I set about it? What rule should I follow?" Let me pursue my invariable custom, and set down in the simplest and most methodical form the elements of the Short Lyric.

The student will, at some time or another, have suffered strong emotions. He will have desired to give them metrical form. He will have done so—and commonly he will have gone no further. I have before me as I write a verse, the opening of one of the most unsuccessful poems ever written. It runs:—

"I am not as my fathers were,
I cannot pass from sleep to sleep,
Or live content to drink the deep
Contentment of the common air."

This is very bad. It is bad because it proceeded from a deep emotion only, and shot out untrammelled. It has no connexion with verse as an art, and yet that art lies open for any young man who will be patient and humble, and who will *learn*.

His first business is to decide at once between the only two styles possible in manufactured verse, the Obscure and the Prattling. I say "the *only* two styles" because I don't think you can tackle the Grandiose and I am quite certain you couldn't manage the Satiric. I know a young man in Red Lion Square who can do the Grandiose very well, and I am going to boom him when I think the time has come ; but the Student-in-Ordinary cannot do it, so he may put it out of his head.

I will take the Simple or Prattling style first. Choose a subject from out of doors, first because it is the fashion, and secondly because you can go and observe it closely. For you must know that manufactured verse is very like drawing, and in both arts you have to take a model and be careful of details. Let us take (*e.g.*) a Pimpernel.

A Pimpernel is quite easy to write about ; it has remarkable habits, it is not gross or common. It would be much harder to write about grass, for instance, or parsley.

First you write down anything that occurs to you, like this :—

" Pretty little Pimpernel,
May I learn to love you well ? "

You continue in the style of " Twinkle, twinkle."

" Hiding in the mossy shade,
Like a lamp of— ☺ made,
Or a gem by fairies dropt
In their . . . "

And there you stick, just as you had got into the style of the " Allegro." I have no space or leisure to

give the student the full treatment of so great a subject, how he would drag in the closing and opening of the flower, and how (skilfully avoiding the word "dell") he would end his ten or fifteen lines by a repetition of the first (an essential feature of the Prattling style). I will confine myself to showing him what may be made of these ridiculous six lines.

The first has an obvious fault. It runs too quickly, and one falls all over it. We will keep "Little" and put it first, so one might write "Little Purple Pimpernel." But even that won't do, though the alliteration is well enough. What change can we make?

It is at this point that I must introduce you to a most perfect principle. It is called the Mutation of Adjectives—it is almost the whole art of Occ. verse. This principle consists in pulling out one's first obvious adjective, and replacing it by another of similar length, *chosen because it is peculiar*. You must not put in an adjective that could not possibly apply; for instance, you must not speak of the "Ponderous Rabbit" or the "Murky Beasts"; your adjective must be applicable, but it must be startling, as "The Tolerant Cow," "The Stammering Minister," or "The Greasy Hill"—all quite true and most unexpected.

Now, here it is evident that Purple is commonplace. What else can we find about the Pimpernel that is quite true and yet really startling? Let us (for instance) call it "tasteless." There you have it, "Little tasteless Pimpernel"—no one could read that too quickly, and it shows at the same time great knowledge of nature.

I will not weary you with every detail of the process, but I will write down *my* result after all the rules have been properly attended to. Read this, and see whether the lines do not fit with my canons of art, especially in what is called the "choice of words":—

" Little tasteless Pimpernel,
Shepherd's Holt and warning spell*
Crouching in the cushat shade
Like a mond of mowry made. . . ."

And so forth. There you have a perfect little gem. Nearly all the words are curious and well chosen, and yet the metre trips along like a railway carriage. The simplicity lies in the method ; the quaint diction is quarried from Mr. Skeats' excellent book on etymology ; but I need not point out any particular work, as your "Thesaurus" in this matter is for your own choosing.

So much for the Prattling style.

As for the Obscure style, it is so easy that it is getting overdone, and I would not depend too much upon it.

In its origins, it was due to the vagaries of some gentlemen and ladies who suffered from an imperfect education, and wrote as they felt, without stopping to think.

But that first holy rapture cannot be recovered. We must work by rule. The rules attaching to this kind of work are six :—

(1) Put the verb in the wrong place (some leave it out altogether) ;

(2) Use words that may be either verbs or nouns—plurals are very useful ;

(3) Punctuate insufficiently ;

(4) Make a special use of phrases that have two or three meanings ;

(5) Leave out relatives ;

(6) Have whole sentences in apposition.

Some of our young poets have imagined that the mere use of strange words made up the Obscure style. I need not say that they were wrong. Thus, the lines—

" And shall I never tread them more,
My murrant balks of wealden lathes ? "

are singularly bad. Anyone could be obscure in so simple a fashion. It behoves the student rather to read carefully such lines as the following, in which I have again tackled the Pimpernel, this time in the Obscure manner.

I began with "What Pimpernels," which might mean "What! Pimpernels?" or, "*What Pimpernels?*" or again, "What *Pimpernels!*"; expressing surprise, or a question, or astonished admiration; but do you think I am going to give the show away by telling the reader what I mean? Not a bit of it. There is something in our island temper which loves mystery; something of the North. I flatter myself I can do it thoroughly:

"What Pimpernels; a rare indulgence blesses
The winter wasting in imperfect suns
And Pimpernels are in the waning, runs
A hand unknown the careless winter dresses,
Not for your largess to the ruined fells,
Her floors in waste, I call you, Pimpernels."

There! I think that will do very fairly well. One can make sense out of it, and it is broad and full, like a modern religion; it has many aspects, and it makes men think. There is not one unusual word, and the second line is a clear and perfect bit of English. Yet how deep and solemn and thorough is the whole!

And yet, for all my ability in these matters, I may not offer an example for the reader to follow. I am conscious of something more powerful (within this strict channel), and I am haunted reproachfully by a great soul. May I quote what none but She could have written? It is the most perfect thing that modern England knows. Every lesson I might painfully convey there stands manifest, of itself, part of the Created Thing.

THE YELLOW MUSTARD

Oh! ye that prink it to and fro,
In pointed flounce and furbelow,
What have ye known, what can ye know
That have not seen the mustard grow?

A PICKED COMPANY

The yellow mustard is no less
Than God's good gift to loneliness ;
And he was sent in gorgeous press,
To jangle keys at my distress.

I heard the throstle call again
Come hither, Pain ! come hither, Pain !
Till all my shameless feet were fain
To wander through the summer rain.

And far apart from human place,
And flaming like a vast disgrace,
There struck me blinding in the face
The livery of the mustard race.

To see the yellow mustard grow
Beyond the town, above, below ;
Beyond the purple houses, oh !
To see the yellow mustard grow !

NONSENSE FOR CHILDREN

PROEM ¹

CHILD ! do not throw this book about ;
Refrain from the unholy pleasure
Of cutting all the pictures out !
Preserve it as your chiefest treasure.

Child, have you never heard it said
That you are heir to all the ages ?
Why, then, your hands were never made
To tear these beautiful thick pages !

Your little hands were made to take
The better things and leave the worse ones :
They also may be used to shake
The Massive Paws of Elder Persons.

And when your prayers complete the day,
Darling, your little tiny hands
Were also made, I think, to pray
For men that lose their fairylands.

¹ From *The Bad Child's Book of Beasts*. Verses by H. Belloc. Pictures by B.T.B. (Duckworth.)

THE YAK¹

AS a friend to the children commend me the Yak.
You will find it exactly the thing :
It will carry and fetch, you can ride on its back,
Or lead it about with a string.
The Tartar who dwells on the plains of Thibet
(A desolate region of snow)
Has for centuries made it a nursery pet,
And surely the Tartar should know !
Then tell your papa where the Yak can be got,
And if he is awfully rich
He will buy the creature—
Or else he will *not*.
(I cannot be positive which.)

¹ From *The Bad Child's Book of Beasts*. Verses by H. Belloc. Pictures by B.T.B. (Duckworth.)

THE PYTHON¹

A PYTHON I should not advise,—
It needs a doctor for its eyes,
And has the measles yearly.
However, if you feel inclined
To get one (to improve your mind,
And not from fashion merely),
Allow no music near its cage ;
And when it flies into a rage
Chastise it, most severely.
I had an Aunt in Yucatan
Who bought a Python from a man
And kept it for a pet.
She died, because she never knew
These simple little rules and few ;—
The Snake is living yet.

¹ From *More Beasts for Worse Children*. Verses by H. Belloc. Pictures by B.T.B. (Duckworth & Co.)

G¹

G STANDS for Gnu, whose weapons of Defence
Are long, sharp, curling Horns, and Common-
sense.

To these he adds a Name so short and strong,
That even Hardy Boers pronounce it wrong.
How often on a bright Autumnal day
The Pious people of Pretoria say,
“Come, let us hunt the ——” Then no more is heard
But Sounds of Strong Men struggling with a word.
Meanwhile, the distant Gnu with grateful eyes
Observes his opportunity, and flies.

MORAL

Child, if you have a rummy kind of name,
Remember to be thankful for the same.

¹ From *A Moral Alphabet*. By H. B. and B. T. B. (Edward Arnold.)

O¹

O STANDS for Oxford. Hail ! salubrious seat
Of learning ! Academical Retreat !
Home of my Middle Age ! Malarial Spot
Which People call Medeeval (though it's not).
The marshes in the neighbourhood can vie
With Cambridge, but the town itself is dry,
And serves to make a kind of Fold or pen
Wherein to herd a lot of Learned Men.
Were I to write but half of what they know,
It would exhaust the space reserved for " O " ;
And, as my book must not be over big,
I turn at once to " P," which stands for Pig.

MORAL

Be taught by this to speak with moderation
Of places where, with decent application,
One gets a good, sound, middle-class education.

¹ From *A Moral Alphabet*. By H. B. and B. T. B. (Edward Arnold.)

GODOLPHIN HORNE¹

*Who was cursed with the Sin of Pride, and became a
Boot-Black*

GODOLPHIN HORNE was Nobly Born ;
He held the Human Race in Scorn,
And lived with all his Sisters where
His Fatler lived, in Berkeley Square,
And oh ! the Lad was Deathly Proud !
He never shook your Hand or Bowed,
But merely smirked and nodded thus :
How perfectly ridiculous !
Alas ! That such Affected Tricks
Should flourish in a Child of Six !
(For such was young Godolphin's age).
Just then, the Court required a Page,
Whereat The Lord High Chamberlain
(The Kindest and the Best of Men),
He went good-naturedly and took
A Perfectly Enormous Book
Called *People Qualified to Be*
Attendant on His Majesty,
And murmured, as he scanned the list
(To see that no one should be missed),
" There's William Coutts has got the Flue,
And Billy Higgs would never do,
And Guy de Vere is far too young,
And . . . wasn't D'Alton's Father hung ?

¹ From *Cautionary Tales for Children*. Verses by H. Belloc.
Pictures by B. T. B. (Eveleigh Nash.)

And as for Alexander Byng !— . . .
I think I know the kind of thing,
A Churchman, cleanly, nobly born,
Come let us say Godolphin Horne ? ”
But hardly had he said the word
When Murmurs of Dissent were heard.
The King of Iceland’s Eldest Son
Said, “ Thank you ! I am taking none ! ”
The Aged Duchess of Athlone
Remarked, in her sub-acid tone,
“ I doubt if He is what we need ! ”
With which the Bishops all agreed ;
And even Lady Mary Flood
(So Kind, and oh ! so *really* good)
Said, “ No ! He wouldn’t do at all,
He’d make us feel a lot too small.”
The Chamberlain said, “ . . . Well, well, well !
No doubt you’re right. . . . One cannot tell ! ”
He took his Gold and Diamond Pen
And Scratched Godolphin out again.
So now Godolphin is the Boy
Who blacks the Boots at the Savoy.

CONCLUSION

ON COMING TO AN END¹

OF all the simple actions in the world! Of all the simple actions in the world!

One would think it could be done with less effort than the heaving of a sigh. . . . Well—then, one would be wrong.

There is no case of Coming to an End but has about it something of an effort and a jerk, as though Nature abhorred it, and though it be true that some achieve a quiet and a perfect end to one thing or another (as, for instance, to Life), yet this achievement is not arrived at save through the utmost toil, and consequent upon the most persevering and exquisite art.

Now you can say that this may be true of sentient things but not of things inanimate. It is true even of things inanimate.

Look down some straight railway line for a vanishing point to the perspective: you will never find it. Or try to mark the moment when a small target becomes invisible. There is no gradation; a moment it was there, and you missed it—possibly because the Authorities were not going in for journalism that day, and had not chosen a dead calm with the light full on the canvas. A moment it was there and then, as you steamed on, it was gone. The same is true of a lark in the air. You see it and then you do not see it, you only hear its song. And the same is true of that song: you hear it and then suddenly you do not hear it. It is true of a human voice, which is familiar in

¹ From *On Nothing*.

your ear, living and inhabiting the rooms of your house. There comes a day when it ceases altogether—and how positive, how definite and hard is that Coming to an End.

It does not leave an echo behind it, but a sharp edge of emptiness, and very often as one sits beside the fire the memory of that voice suddenly returning gives to the silence about one a personal force, as it were, of obsession and of control. So much happens when even one of all our million voices Comes to an End.

It is necessary, it is august and it is reasonable that the great story of our lives also should be accomplished and should reach a term: and yet there is something in that hidden duality of ours which makes the prospect of so natural a conclusion terrible, and it is the better judgment of mankind and the mature conclusion of civilization in their age that there is not only a conclusion here but something of an adventure also. It may be so.

Those who solace mankind and are the principal benefactors of it, I mean the poets and the musicians, have attempted always to ease the prospect of Coming to an End, whether it were the Coming to an End of the things we love or of that daily habit and conversation which is our life and is the atmosphere wherein we loved them. Indeed this is a clear test whereby you may distinguish the great artists from the mean hucksters and charlatans, that they first approach and reveal what is dreadful with calm and, as it were, with a purpose to use it for a good, while the vulgar catch-penny fellows must liven up their bad dishes as with a cheap sauce of the horrible, caring nothing, so that their shrieks sell, whether we are the better for them or no.

The great poets, I say, bring us easily or grandly to the gate: as in that *Ode to a Nightingale* where it is thought good (in an immortal phrase) to pass painlessly at midnight, or, in the glorious line which Ronsard uses, like a salute with the sword, hailing "la profitable mort."

The noblest or the most perfect of English elegies leaves, as a sort of savour after the reading of it, no terror at all, nor even too much regret, but the landscape of England at evening, when the smoke of the cottages mixes with autumn vapours among the elms; and even that gloomy modern *Ode to the West Wind*, unfinished and touched with despair, though it will speak of—

. . . *that outer place forlorn*
Which, like an infinite grey sea, surrounds
With everlasting calm the land of human sounds ;

yet also returns to the sacramental earth of one's childhood where it says :

For now the Night completed tells her tale
Of rest and dissolution : gathering round
Her mist in such persuasion that the ground
Of Home consents to falter and grow pale.
And the stars are put out and the trees fail
Nor anything remains but that which drones
Enormous through the dark. . . .

And again, in another place, where it prays that one may at the last be fed with beauty—

. . . . *as the flowers are fed*
That fill their falling-time with generous breath :
Let me attain a natural end of death,
And on the mighty breast, as on a bed,
Lay decently at last a drowsy head,
Content to lapse in somnolence and fade
In dreaming once again the dream of all things made.

The most careful philosophy, the most heavenly music, the best choice of poetic or prosaic phrase prepare men properly for man's perpetual loss of this and of that, and introduce us proudly to the similar and greater business of departure from them all, from whatever of them all remains at the close.

To be introduced, to be prepared, to be armoured, all these are excellent things, but there is a question

no foresight can answer nor any comprehension resolve. It is right to gather upon that question the varied affections or perceptions of varying men.

I knew a man once in the Tourdenoise, a gloomy man, but very rich, who cared little for the things he knew. This man took no pleasure in his fruitful orchards and his carefully ploughed fields and his harvests. He took pleasure in pine trees ; he was a man of groves and of the dark. For him that things should come to an end was but part of an universal rhythm ; a part pleasing to the general harmony, and making in the music of the world about him a solemn and, oh, a conclusive chord. This man would study the sky at night and take from it a larger and a larger draught of infinitude, finding in this exercise not a mere satisfaction, but an object and goal for the mind ; when he had so wandered for a while under the night he seemed, for the moment, to have reached the object of his being.

And I knew another man in the Weald who worked with his hands, and was always kind, and knew his trade well ; he smiled when he talked of scythes, and he could thatch. He could fish also, and he knew about grafting, and about the seasons of plants, and birds, and the way of seed. He had a face full of weather, he fatigued his body, he watched his land. He would not talk much of mysteries, he would rather hum songs. He loved new friends and old. He had lived with one wife for fifty years, and he had five children, who were a policeman, a schoolmistress, a son at home, and two who were sailors. This man said that what a man did and the life in which he did it was like the farm work upon a summer's day. . He said one works a little and rests, and works a little again, and one drinks, and there is a perpetual talk with those about one. Then (he would say) the shadows lengthen at evening, the wind falls, the birds get back home. And as for ourselves, we are sleepy before it is dark.

Then also I knew a third man who lived in a

town and was clerical and did no work, for he had money of his own. This man said that all we do and the time in which we do it is rather a night than a day. He said that when we came to an end we vanished, we and our works, but that we vanished into a broadening light.

Which of these three knew best the nature of man and of his works, and which knew best of what nature was the end ?

Why so glum, my Lad, or my Lass (as the case may be), why so heavy at heart ? Did you not know that you also must Come to an End ?

Why, that woman of Etaples who sold such Southern wine for the dissipation of the Picardian Mist, her time is over and gone and the wine has been drunk long ago and the singers in her house have departed, and the wind of the sea moans in and fills their hall. The Lords who died in Roncesvalles have been dead these thousand years and more, and the loud song about them grew very faint and dwindled and is silent now : there is nothing at all remains.

It is certain that the hills decay and that rivers as the dusty years proceed run feebly and lose themselves at last in desert sands ; and in its æons the very firmament grows old. But evil also is perishable and bad men meet their judge. Be comforted.

Now of all endings, of all Comings to an End none is so hesitating as the ending of a book which the Publisher will have so long and the writer so short : and the Public (God Bless the Public) will have whatever it is given.

Books, however much their lingering, books also must Come to an End. It is abhorrent to their nature as to the life of man. They must be sharply cut off. Let it be done at once and fixed as by a spell and the power of a Word ; the word FINIS.

"HE DOES NOT DIE"¹

MY metre, which at first eluded me (though it had been with me in a way for many hours) was given me by these chance lines that came :

" . . . and therefore even youth that dies
May leave of right its legacies."

I put my pencil upon the paper, doubtfully, and drew little lines, considering my theme. But I would not long hesitate in this manner, for I knew that all creation must be chaos first, and then gestures in the void before it can cast out the completed thing. So I put down in fragments this line and that ; and thinking first of how many children below me upon that large and fruitful floor were but entering what I must perforce abandon, I wrote down :

" . . . and of mine opulence I leave
To every Sussex girl and boy
My lot in universal joy."

Having written this down, I knew clearly what was in my mind.

The way in which our land and we mix up together and are part of the same thing sustained me, and led on the separate parts of my growing poem towards me ; introducing them one by one ; till at last I wrote down this further line :

" One with our random fields we grow."

¹ From *The Four Men*. (Thomas Nelson & Sons.)

And since I could not for the moment fill in the middle of the verse, I wrote the end, which was already fashioned :

“ . . . because of lineage and because
The soil and memories out of mind
Embranch and broaden all mankind.”

Ah ! but if a man is part of and is rooted in one steadfast piece of earth, which has nourished him and given him his being, and if he can on his side lend it glory and do it service (I thought), it will be a friend to him for ever, and he has outflanked Death in a way.

“ And I shall pass ” (thought I), “ but this shall stand
Almost as long as No-Man’s Land.”

“ No, certainly,” I answered to myself aloud, “ he does not die ! ” Then from that phrase there ran the fugue, and my last stanzas stood out clear at once, complete and full, and I wrote them down as rapidly as writing can go.

“ He does not die ” (I wrote) “ that can bequeath
Some influence to the land he knows,
Or dares, persistent, interwreath
Love permanent with the wild hedgerows ;
He does not die, but still remains
Substantiate with his darling plains.

The spring’s superb adventure calls
His dust athwart the woods to flame ;
His boundary river’s secret falls
Perpetuate and repeat his name.
He rides his loud October sky :
He does not die, He does not die.

The beeches know the accustomed head
Which loved them, and a peopled air
Beneath their benediction spread
Comforts the silence everywhere ;
For native ghosts return and these
Perfect the mystery in the trees.

So, therefore, though myself be cross'd
The shuddering of that dreadful day
When friend and fire and home are lost
And even children drawn away—

The passer-by shall hear me still,
A boy that sings on Duncton Hill."

Full of these thoughts and greatly relieved by the metrical expression, I went, through the gathering darkness, southward across the Downs to my home.

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